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AUTHOR Oakeshott, Martin
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ABSTRACT

A project conducted by Britain's Further Education Unit: (1) identified and evaluated strategies used by Educational Guidance Services for Adults (EGSAs) to feed back to providers of learning opportunities the unmet needs of adult clients with particular reference to the unemployed and unwaged; (2) identified and evaluated mechanisms used by institutions to respond to such feedback; and (3) made recommendations for guidance services on improved or new methods for responding to the unmet needs of adults entering the education system. The localities for the three case studies were the Bradford Metropolitan District, the London Borough of Hackney, and the County of Hertfordshire, all of which presented different socioeconomic factors and rates of unemployment, as well as established guidance services for adults with contrasting management structures, resources, facilities, and methods of service delivery. Data were collected through interviews with guidance staff. The following were among the study's recommendations: (1) the EGSAs will benefit most from their feedback if they pursue a proactive strategy for service delivery and maintain information systems; (2) providers should assign a senior staff member to coordinate the strategy for obtaining and responding to feedback; (3) local education authorities should develop policy on adult educational guidance, a central part of which should concern feedback; and (4) the Educational Guidance Initiative should encourage staff training programs on guidance. (The document contains 45 references and 9 appendices with case study descriptions and sample feedback forms.) (CML)

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Educational Guidance & Curriculum Change

A Project Report
by Martin Oakeshott

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by Martin Oakeshott

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Management of the Project was the responsibility of:

Sue Pedder	Project Director, ALFA
Martin Johnson	Development Officer, FEU

The research was carried out by:

Martin Oakeshott	Project Officer

The Project Seering Group was:

Janet Clark (Chair)	Vice Principal, City & East London College
Judy Alloway	Senior Development Officer, UDACE
John Clark	Senior Lecturer, Kingsway College (for ALFA Projects Group)
David Davies	Local Employer Netowrk, City & East London
Richard Edwards	REPLAN Officer, Kent
Gloria Elliot	Co-ordinator, Education Advice Service for Islington Adults
Alison McGarry	Co-ordinator, Hackney Education Advice Service
Ruth Michaels	Director, Hatfield Education Guidance for Adults and Hatfield Polytechnic
Mick Murray	Co-ordinator, Education Advice Service for Adults, Bradford
Eithne Nightingale	Hackney Adult Education Institute
Reg Smith	Senior County Inspector, Essex LEA

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Martin Oakeshott
Project Officer

FOREWORD

In *The Challenge of Change* (UDACE, 1986) seven main activities were identified as ingredients of educational guidance. Of these, the seventh, 'Feeding back' is the least researched. It is easy to see why in a period of growth for educational guidance services this aspect has received little attention, as the emphasis has inevitably been on the provision of services to members of the public. On the other hand if guidance is to be fully effective it should not only match people with educational provision but should match that provision to its primary clients, the public. In the early days of guidance services their effectiveness in this area was hampered by poor resourcing, low status and poor record keeping. Now services are becoming more established the opportunity to affect the provision of education services is increasing. This may be by providing advice to educational institutions about unmet needs in course provision but may equally be about infra-structure such as reception or creche services. The potential of guidance to shape the adult curriculum is far-reaching.

The project researched feedback from the point of view of both guidance services and educational institutions, using three case studies in contrasting areas. It addresses recommendations to the above partners in feedback but also to local authorities, placing emphasis not only on good practice in guidance services but also on recognition and positive partnership from colleges and adequate resourcing from local authorities.

Although FEU funded and monitored the project, UDACE were partners in the Steering Committee. Given this partnership and UDACE's central role in the development of educational guidance for adults the report is jointly published by UDACE and FEU. We jointly commend it to all involved in the provision of guidance and educational opportunities for adults.

Martin Johnson
Development Officer, FEU

Judy Alloway
Senior Development Officer, UDACE

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Project

The initiative for the project came from the Open College of North London (ALFA – Access to Learning for Adults, see Appendix VII). The network aims to provide greater access to education and training opportunities for adults, particularly disadvantaged groups such as unemployed/unwaged adults. Part of its discussions had focussed on the strategies used by Educational Guidance Services for Adults (EGSAs) in the network to feed back to providers information on the unmet learning needs of their users.

The process of educational guidance was the subject of *The Challenge of Change* [1], a report published by UDACE (The Unit for the Development of Adult Continuing Education, see Appendix IX) in 1986. While the first aim of educational guidance was seen as helping individuals to clarify their learning needs and interests and to take up learning opportunities, the second aim of guidance was to

> *'gather information on unmet, or inappropriately met, learning needs in order to help those who provide learning opportunities...to understand and respond to the needs of adult learners.'*

The activity of communicating with providers about unmet needs (feedback) was seen by UDACE as having great potential to change the curriculum in ways that would benefit adult learners. The purpose of this project was to explore this activity in depth and to offer guidelines to make feedback more effective.

The project was funded by the Further Education Unit of the Department of Education and Science as part of the REPLAN programme which is designed to support the provision of education and training for unemployed/unwaged adults (Appendix VIII).

1.2 The Project Aims

The aims of the project were:

(i) to identify, review and evaluate strategies used by educational guidance services to feed back to providers of learning opportunities the

unmet learning needs of adult clients with particular reference to the unemployed and unwaged;

(ii) to identify, review and evaluate mechanisms used by institutions to respond to such feedback;

(iii) to make recommendations and draw up guidelines for guidance services on improved or new methods of feeding back into the curriculum, and for institutions on improved methods for responding to the unmet needs of adults entering the education system.

1.3 Definitions

A wide definition of curriculum was adopted, to include all relevant processes, e.g. pedagogic issues; institutional and personal attitudes to adult students; grants, fee concessions; admissions policies; links between courses, colleges and other providers; entry requirements, course information; publicity; problems over regulations of other agencies (e.g. interpretation of the 21 hour rule); those factors within the institutions that lead to student withdrawal; equal opportunity policies.

The research was focussed on feedback activity that was relevant to the learning needs of unemployed/unwaged adults. Unwaged was taken to mean those groups of adults who were not in paid work and who were not registered as unemployed (e.g. parents, disabled people).

The project chose to study the work of EGSAs because they offer the full range of educational guidance activities (see Chapter 2.2), and have, more than any other agency, attempted to feed back information on the learning needs of adults. While issues relating to employment are frequently part of discussions of learning needs, the main aim of EGSAs is to provide educational rather than vocational guidance. EGSAs should be seen as part of a range of advice services available to unemployed/unwaged adults.

The definition of feedback itself is considered in Chapter 2.3.

1.4 Case Studies

The research was conducted in three case study areas (Appendix I). In each area an EGSA had been operating for some time. The three areas offered contrasting studies in terms of the structure and operation of the EGSAs, the provision of education and training for adults, and the levels of unemployment.

The fieldwork was conducted by interviews with staff in EGSAs and statutory providers and with local authority officers.

1.5 Intentions

The report and guidelines are focussed on feedback between EGSAs and providers. They are intended to make staff in both EGSAs and providers more aware of the potential that feedback offers and provide some practical assistance in making the process more effective. It was clear from the issues identified by the EGSAs that feedback has implications that go beyond providers to local authorities and government agencies, and this is reflected in the recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

FEEDBACK IN EDUCATIONAL GUIDANCE

2.1 Educational Guidance Services for Adults

The growth of educational guidance services for adults (EGSAs) in the late 1970s and early 1980s can be seen in the context of a wide recognition among those working in adult and continuing education of the **need to broaden access for adults to education and training opportunities**. The existing educational provision for adults on the whole catered best for those who had already gained most from school and post-school education; patterns of discrimination that existed in other institutions were found to be repeated in education. The UDACE report *The Challenge of Change*, drawing on research by ACACE, described:

> *'...a service of education and training catering for the best educated, and particularly for those who feel most at home in, and have easiest access to, educational institutions. The ACACE research demonstrated clearly how this tends to result in a great concentration of relatively well educated men in heavily subsidised, work related education, while women dominated the slenderly subsidised part-time opportunities, and some socio-economic groups were conspicuously absent. Similar patterns of discrimination exist in other areas, and the under representation of many groups in education is very evident. These groups would include, among others, the unemployed, the retired, members of ethnic minorities, ex-offenders, people with basic education or second language needs, and the physically and mentally disabled. [1, 2]*

The research also pointed to the existence of a substantial submerged demand for learning among the adult population as a whole, a demand which was, however, frustrated by lack of awareness of available opportunities.

A recent study of adults' attitudes to education and training [3] found that existing sources of guidance (including education and training providers, careers services, job centres, employers, etc.) were used by 30% or more of the adult population. Those who used the existing services were younger, from higher socio-economic groups and were more likely to already have education qualifications, than those who did not use the services. Conversely, those who did not use the existing services, the majority of the adult

population, were likely to be older, of lower socio-economic status, and to have fewer educational qualifications than users.

The study also showed that most adults, including those with advanced educational qualifications, found that information about education and training opportunities was not enough on its own. They needed help in asking the right questions in order to work out what their learning needs were.

The rapid, widespread increase in **unemployment** and consequent social upheaval during the late 1970s and early 1980s reinforced the need for educators to examine the relevance of education and training opportunities for adults. Adult and community education workers attempting to focus on the needs of unemployed and unwaged adults were aware that many adults saw education as irrelevant and a reminder of their negative experiences at school. It was clear that if educational opportunities were to be shaped to meet the needs of this group, educational guidance would be needed to enable unemployed and unwaged people to identify and articulate their learning needs.

In doing so, educational guidance services would have to start from the perspective of the unemployed and unwaged adults who were their clients. Many of the EGSAs set up in the early 1980s therefore had a community focus and, on the model of community-based advice agencies, endeavoured to find premises that were both accessible to enquirers and also located away from educational institutions to emphasise their neutrality. There was an assumption among many EGSAs that they would engage in advocacy on behalf of their users, and that the process of guidance would lead to changes in the curriculum [4].

The period of recession and high unemployment has also been one of shrinking **resources** for public services, including education. It is against this background that EGSAs have been set up; their development has until recently depended on local initiatives, with funds taken from hard-pressed budgets or from temporary sources. The initiatives have been small-scale, with few posts often on low salary grades. This has meant in practice that EGSAs have rapidly reached the point where they are working at full capacity delivering guidance to individuals and groups. It has been difficult for them to allocate resources to feedback activity with such a high level of demand. As one interviewee commented:

> *'The EGSA is a counselling service for individuals; if someone is waiting outside their door, that is their first priority. EGSA staff find it hard to justify committee work when they could be counselling – there is a constant tension there.'* (Director of Continuing Education HE institution)

(For resources of the EGSAs see Appendix III).

2.2 UDACE: 'The Challenge of Change' Guidance Activities

This report [1] drew on existing practice of educational guidance in a range of agencies including EGSAs to distinguish seven different activities involved in educational guidance:

Informing

Providing information about learning opportunities and related support facilities available, without any discussion of the relative merits of options for particular clients. Since most published educational information is produced for promotional purposes 'pure' information is rare.

Advising

Helping clients to interpret information and choose the most appropriate option. To benefit from advice clients must already have a fairly clear idea of what their needs are.

Counselling

Working with clients to help them to discover, clarify, assess and understand their learning needs and the various ways of meeting them. Clients requiring counselling are likely to be unclear about their needs and require time to explore their feelings about the options, and counselling is therefore more likely to involve a series of contacts with a single client.

Assessing

Helping clients, by formal or informal means, to obtain an adequate understanding of their personal, educational and vocational development, in order to enable them to make sound judgments about the appropriateness of particular learning opportunities.

Enabling

Supporting the client in dealing with the agencies providing education or training, or in meeting the demands of particular courses. This may involve simple advice on completing application forms, advice on ways of negotiating changes in course content or arrangements, or assistance to independent learners. A further kind of enabling is provided through 'Access' and 'Wider Opportunities' courses which may offer both group guidance and the teaching of study skills.

Advocating

Negotiating directly with institutions or agencies on behalf of individual groups for whom there may be additional barriers to access or to learning (e.g. negotiating exceptional entry arrangements or modifications to courses).

Feeding back

Gathering and collating information on unmet, or inappropriately met, needs, and encouraging providers of learning opportunities to respond by developing their provision. This may involve practical changes (e.g. changing the presentation of course information or changing timetables) or curricular ones (e.g. designing new courses for new client groups, or changing the way in which existing courses are taught to make them more appropriate for adult learners).

2.3 Definitions of Feedback

It is clear that the activities described above are in practice highly interrelated and guidance workers interviewed pointed out that much of their informal feedback was embedded in other activities. However, for this report it is important to make a clear **distinction between advocacy and feedback**, as in the following examples:

Example of advocacy

An individual has been refused entry to a course because she did not possess the requisite qualifications. The guidance worker contacts the provider on behalf of the individual to explore alternative means of entry to the course, e.g. through interview, testing, etc.

Example of feedback

Based on experiences of working with users who have found it difficult to gain entry to a particular course, the EGSA seeks a meeting with the course tutor and head of department to discuss the issue of access for adults to the course.

Whereas advocacy in the above example is an attempt to achieve an outcome for an individual, feedback is concerned with changing the curriculum. Advocacy can therefore be seen as an extension of enabling and other guidance activities that assist individuals; feedback is complementary to these activities and seeks to make changes in provision for potential learners. Clearly advocacy and feedback are interrelated, and repeated advocacy would tend to generate feedback. However, in order to focus on feedback in this report it is helpful to make a distinction between the two activities.

The Challenge of Change suggested that the aim of the guidance activities described above, including feedback, would be to improve the match between learning opportunities and the needs and interests of learners. This would lead to a more effective, economical and relevant service of education and training and to an increase in public confidence in the ability of the service to meet their needs. The report emphasised that providers were developing their provision to meet new and changing requirements, and pointed to the close relationship between guidance and curriculum change.

> *'...guidance workers have a role to play in the design and implementation of education and training programmes, helping in the identification of needs and in the planning of ways to meet them, in the light of their special knowledge of what potential and current learners are seeking, and the ways in which they learn or fail to learn.' [1]*

Educational Guidance Services may have their own perspectives on the definition of feedback, which will be based on the underlying aims and values which inform and shape the operation of their services. How they see feedback will thus depend on their relationship to their clients on the one hand – e.g. whether they target certain groups of clients – and how they view the existing provision of education and training on the other hand. [see Chapter 5 for three different perspectives on the shortcomings of existing provision.]

In the three case studies the activity of feedback was seen by the EGSAs as an essential part of their work, complementing the activities of guidance with individuals and groups, and enabling the services to contribute to the process of curriculum change.

Two services emphasised certain aspects of the activity. For service A it was important that feedback aimed to achieve major shifts in provision, and worked towards greater control by learners of learning resources. Service B pointed to:

> *'the dynamic aspect of feedback; it can be at one level an exchange about the curriculum, but part of the input must be about prospective students themselves ...(it is) not just the Education Advice Service delivering a document that says we need more creches, more 21 hour courses, but finding a way of institutions actually developing structures that enable adult returners themselves to comment on and participate in a feedback role.'* (EGSA Co-ordinator)

However, services agreed that feedback activity was both critical and supportive. It involved defining gaps in provision and barriers to access – and also supporting and encouraging providers to develop a more responsive curriculum.

For the **providers of education and training**, feedback from EGSAs was a source of information which could be used to shape the curriculum in a number of ways:

> *'The feedback for our curriculum development is largely in the identification of unmet needs, in helping us to design new provision, modify existing provision, and in raising the profile in the college of local adults as people, and their needs.'* (Vice Principal, FE College)

Feedback was seen by some interviewees as offering guidance and support to curriculum development:

> *'We look to the EGSA for guidance as to how we can amend what we do; what they are saying is very much in line with the*

ways in which we are responding flexibly to adults.' (Team Leader, Communications Workshop in FE College)

EXAMPLE 1

Short courses for unemployed adults

The EGSA identified a need for short courses with training allowances tailored to the individual needs of unemployed adults and, together with FE college staff, set up a meeting with the college principal.

The response to the feedback was positive, as it fitted in with the college aim of directing provision towards the local community. As a result, short courses were set up in a suitable location (college annexe) with college funds, although training allowances were not available.

For providers, obtaining and responding to feedback would come under the broad heading of market research. This point is developed further in Chapter 4.

The **local authorities** in the case studies were formulating policies on educational guidance. Guidance was seen as one aspect of opening up educational provision to adults. The feedback activity was therefore an essential part of the process of guidance.

'It is not enough to be good at counselling and guiding people; that is a necessary but not sufficient condition of good educational guidance... (The question is) as a consequence of guidance, and all the things we discover in guidance, does feedback from the EGSA actually affect the institutions or the authority's policy-making?' (County Adviser for FE)

Feedback activity was mentioned in committee reports [6, 11] and in one case in the authority's Work-Related Non-Advanced Further Education Plan [10]. A Committee report arguing for additional resources for EGSAs contains a section on feedback which opens with the following definition:

'Education Advice and Counselling Services share the objective of feeding back information to providers. This crucial function allows adult needs to inform the development of provision (courses, support, finance etc).' [11]

Local authorities were at an early stage of developing policy on educational guidance. Their policy documents did not describe the activity of feedback in any detail, but there was an assumption that feedback was an important benefit arising from the development of educational guidance.

A definition of feedback for this report

The activity of feedback should be seen as complementary to the other guidance activities, moving beyond the work with individuals and groups to influence the curriculum.

It involves:

- gathering information about unmet and inappropriately met needs of adult learners and the barriers to access which deter them from taking up learning opportunities;
- communicating this information to providers, local authorities and other relevant bodies, in order to contribute to the process of developing a curriculum which is accessible to adults, appropriate to their learning needs, and enables them to participate in decisions about the learning process;
- supporting and initiating developments in the curriculum which meet the needs of adult learners.

Table 1 – A Model of the Feedback Process

CONTEXT OF FEEDBACK →	EVIDENCE →	FEEDBACK PROCEDURES →	EVALUATION
AIMS AND VALUES OF THE EGSA – target groups – priority of feedback **RESOURCES** **MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE** – staff training – support structure for staff engaged in feedback **DELIVERY OF SERVICE** pro-active strategy including – accessibility of service – collaborative work – importance of counselling – enabling users to evaluate the service – making time for feedback – developing a positive approach and communicating what the EGSA can offer	**IDENTIFYING LEARNING NEEDS** **COLLECTING/STORING INFORMATION** (a) on curriculum (b) work-related areas (e.g. skills shortages) (c) from users for: – further guidance work – monitoring the service – FEEDBACK Record information on unmet needs and barriers to access **RETRIEVING INFORMATION & ESTABLISHING THE ISSUES** – unmet/inappropriately met needs – barriers to access – positive curriculum developments	**SETTING UP A RANGE OF MECHANISMS** – informal – key individuals – formal **FEEDING BACK** – choose the issue – have clear objectives – anticipate response – select mechanisms – communicate the issue (e.g. verbal + report, statistics) – be specific	**MONITORING & REVIEWING FEEDBACK** – distinguish feedback from other activities – record feedback – criteria for success e.g. curriculum change, raising awareness, making further feedback possible This leads to: Further issues for feedback Pressure for more resources Accepting feedback about the EGSA

CHAPTER 3

THE FEEDBACK PROCESS (THE EGSA'S PERSPECTIVE)

This section looks at the feedback process from the perspective of the EGSA (see model in Table 1). This model is based on feedback to providers as this is the most frequent activity; it can however be applied to feedback to other target bodies, e.g. local authorities, central government agencies and other bodies.

3.1 The Context of Feedback: Establishing Favourable Conditions for Feedback to be Effective

The EGSAs stated that the key to effective feedback was to take the initiative and to be proactive. This requires a strategy which covers all aspects of the delivery of the service, and which makes feedback a priority.

3.1.1 The aims and values of EGSAs

The guidance process aims to enable adults to identify their learning needs. From this process emerge the unmet or inappropriately met needs, barriers to access, and positive curriculum developments which require feeding back. However, the way that an EGSA works to help people identify their learning needs depends, in the first place on the aims and values of the service, the basic assumptions about who it is aiming to serve and why.

The case study EGSAs were therefore asked to define the priorities in their work and to say whether their services targeted certain groups of potential users. The different responses of the three services to the question on target groups reflected in part the composition of the unemployed and unwaged groups in the three areas. Areas A and B had high levels of unemployment and associated social deprivation; Area C had a relatively low level of unemployment, and women returning to education or work were seen as a significant client group by both education providers and employers.

Case Study A

The EGSA defined four priorities:

- offering the full range of guidance activities at the EGSA base (library premises) to all who required them;
- making the service available to groups disadvantaged by the education system or by social and economic factors external to, or intertwined with, the education system;
- feedback to providers, LEA, voluntary and statutory agencies about the quality and range of opportunities on offer and about barriers to access;
- attempting to shift the balance of control of learning from provider to learner.

In order to carry out the second of these priorities, the service was targeted towards adults who have been least well-served by the education system, and its policy was to make the delivery of the service proactive rather than responsive, particularly in its outreach work.

Case Study B

The first priority of the service was dealing with day to day enquiries, which took up to 50% of their work. In addition to this there were three priorities:

- feedback, which had been central to the work from the start of the service;
- community liaison and outreach work;
- information retrieval and computerising their information systems.

On the question of targeting, the Annual Report of the service (1987) states that:

> *'[The EGSA] considers post-school information, advice and counselling an essential part of the larger task of making further and continuing education accessible and relevant to people who have been denied access to education and training opportunities.'* [13]

The report goes on to discuss the needs of unemployed and unwaged adults in the area (which has a high level of unemployment).

Case Study C

Here the EGSA defined its priorities as:

- offering informed information to all who requested it;
- ensuring that counsellors had up-to-date information about education and training opportunities for adults;
- developing links and contacts across the area.

The service did not define target groups, but a significant part of its outreach work was directed towards disabled people. Women returners were seen as an important group within the overall category of unemployed and unwaged.

3.1.2 Securing adequate support

EGSAs, even if well resourced, are by their nature small organisations. Many have been keen to remain independent of education and training providers, to ensure the impartiality of their guidance work. This has sometimes left the services in an isolated position. Inadequate levels of funding, concerns about their long-term survival (experienced by all three case study EGSAs) and lack of support from local authorities may make their position worse.

This lack of support may be reflected in the management structures, unsuitable premises, or in other aspects of the service. In one case study EGSA, the question of grading of staff was a key issue; it was felt that their low status meant that they could easily be ignored by senior management in providers who were unreceptive to feedback.

EXAMPLE 2

Complaints about a craft skills course

An elected member of the authority had received complaints from women on a craft skills training course at a college of FE concerning lack of support (timetabling and creche provision) and sexism and racism of teaching materials. The member approached the EGSA for advice about feeding back to the college. It was decided that the member should take the issue to the college principal, and if that was unsuccessful to the chair of governors.

The college agreed to investigate the situation, but did not accept the complaints of sexism and racism.

The EGSA felt that its status and credibility was such that it was unlikely to have much impact on the senior management of the college, and therefore advised the member to take up the issue with the college directly. The EGSA also felt that staff working in areas not traditionally associated with mature students (or, in this case, with women students) were much less likely to welcome an approach from the service than in other areas such as Fresh Start provision.

The effect of these difficulties on feedback work can be seen from example 2, where impact was lost because the EGSA lacked credibility with the provider. In these conditions guidance workers are likely to become demoralised because it is difficult for them to recognise their positive achievements, which are often lost in the overall pressure of demand on the services.

EXAMPLE 3

Criticism of another service

The EGSA had received complaints from their users of racist treatment and stereotyping by another educational agency in the area. The objectives of the EGSA were to raise the issue with the agency so that it would take positive action, putting its equal opportunities policy into practice, e.g. by employing more black staff and providing staff training on race issues.

A particular case was taken up through a telephone call to the agency and the general issue was raised by the EGSA verbally and through a written report to an inter-agency structure responsible for collaborative work between the EGSA and the agency concerned.

The initial response of the agency was defensive, the assumption being that such a criticism could not be true, and no positive action was taken. Both EGSA staff and users felt that their voice had not been heard. Referrals from the EGSA to the agency decreased and relationships between staff of the two agencies deteriorated.

The defensiveness of the agency's response made it difficult to pursue the issue. The EGSA staff felt under great pressure to drop the issue both from the agency concerned and because of the time needed to pursue it. However, the EGSA felt that ignoring such an issue would undermine the value of its guidance work. The case illustrated for the EGSA the need for support for staff working on feedback.

When feeding back difficult issues, guidance workers require skills in negotiating and need to persist sometimes in the face of a hostile response. The activity of feedback thus highlights the need for appropriate training, support and management structures for guidance workers.

Management structures would need to provide clear lines of accountability and support for staff, and also secure the independence of the EGSA. This is important for the impartiality of its guidance work, including feedback. The existing practice of management committees of EGSAs, with representatives from local authorities, providers, users and other bodies, has been useful in ensuring independence.

Although sources of funds and management structures of EGSAs will differ, the experience of the case studies suggests that in order to provide a context favourable to feedback EGSAs will need:

- adequate levels of resources;
- access to staff development and training;
- appropriate management structures.

3.1.3 Local educational guidance networks

EGSAs are one link in the process of educational guidance. A comprehensive system of educational guidance for adults would involve a network of organisations and contacts in each local area. The concept of an educational guidance network as developed by UDACE [1, 15] implies a linking of agencies which is both more formal and more wide-ranging than anything existing in the case studies. In case studies A and C, the local authorities were developing policy on educational guidance networks, with the involvement of the EGSAs.

Such a network, formally constituted, would offer great potential for the expansion of feedback activity. Mechanisms based on existing practice would need to be developed in order to make feedback possible between agencies and institutions, across sectors, and to local authorities.

The Challenge of Change [1] recommended that local educational guidance units should be set up as the core agencies in each local educational guidance network. In many areas the existing EGSAs will be the most appropriate organisation to fulfill this coordinating role. EGSAs will therefore need to promote the concept of local educational guidance networks with authorities and providers and seek to play a central role when they are established. The functions of these networks are discussed in Chapter 5.2.2.

3.1.4 Identifying learning needs

EGSAs aim to enable adults to identify their learning needs and from this activity the services can establish the issues which will form the material of feedback. The experience of EGSA workers is that enabling adults to identify their learning needs is a complex process. One of the responses to the rapid growth of unemployment in recent years has been an attempt through **research projects** to identify the learning needs of unemployed and unwaged adults [15-20]. This research has produced some conclusions which confirm the experience of EGSA staff working with this group of users.

- Unemployed and unwaged adults are, in terms of range, an extremely diverse group. The only characteristic that they share is that they are not in paid work. In terms of balance, however, they include disproportionate numbers of people from relatively disadvantaged groups, including working class people, women, black people, the disabled, older people, and people who are unskilled or with few formal educational qualifications. Their learning needs are likely therefore to be heterogeneous, but as a group they will include many people for whom education at school was a negative experience, and who see post school education as inaccessible or irrelevant to their needs.
- Many unemployed and unwaged people are physically isolated and experience their situation in an individual way rather than as a shared experience, which can be psychologically threatening. This can apply equally to a parent looking after children, to a disabled person, or to someone who loses their job.
- It is a common experience for unemployed and unwaged people to feel powerless about their situation, and to blame themselves for it.

> This applies to the experience of educational 'failure' as much as to other situations.

The effect of these factors for many unemployed and unwaged adults is a lack confidence which makes it difficult for them to identify and articulate their learning needs. Common responses to questions about learning needs are: that the needs are unspecific, not immediately apparent; there is a lack of great hopes, ambitions are very modest; the needs and wishes are shaped by perceptions of what is available in the existing provision, or by perceptions of skills needed in the labour market; experience and skills learnt outside formal education are undervalued.

Unemployed and unwaged adults therefore need **time and support**, both from guidance workers and from peer groups, to enable them to build up the confidence necessary to define appropriate learning needs and demand the opportunities to achieve them. **The activity of counselling is of central importance** for EGSAs in enabling adults to define their learning needs, particularly as this activity involves helping adults to recognise that they have been learning through experiences other than formal education or training.

The activity of building confidence and raising expectations has been described as 'empowerment' [16], which is close to the aim of EGSAs in the case studies to enable adult learners to gain greater control over learning resources. It also brings up the question of the **EGSA's credibility with its users.** The process of enabling individuals to identify their learning needs carries the implication that these needs will be heard. For the EGSA advocacy and feedback are the activities which take up the issues of needs that are not met. The EGSAs reported that a significant number of users had expectations that the service could enable them to find ways around the barriers or to negotiate a learning opportunity where none apparently existed. Users also informed guidance workers about difficulties they had encountered, with the expectation that the EGSA could take matters up with institutions, not necessarily on behalf of those users themselves but so that others would not experience the same difficulties.

3.1.5 Proactive service delivery

In order to achieve their aims (see Chapter 3.1.1) the three services operated an **information, advice, and counselling service for the public**, through a mixture of appointments, drop-in sessions and outreach work, the balance of which depended on staffing levels, location and accessibility of each service.

In two services interviewees emphasised the importance of having **a proactive strategy** for delivery of the service based on local priorities to avoid becoming overwhelmed by attempting to respond to the enormous demand for guidance from the public.

A proactive strategy would enable the EGSA to make feedback a priority. To do this it would have to consider ways of **making time for feedback**. All three case study EGSAs felt that they did not have sufficient time to concentrate on feedback adequately, although two services saw feedback as a priority. Since EGSAs are working in a situation where the submerged de-

mand for learning is likely to exceed their resources to provide guidance – for example the number of enquiries doubled in one year in case study C [14] – the first response is always to attempt to cope with this demand, and to leave feedback till another day. A proactive strategy will therefore mean setting aside time for feedback, at the expense of other guidance activities.

Such a strategy has risks and benefits. In the short term the risk is that the service will face criticism for turning away enquirers. However, if the EGSA is involved in feedback that is effective it will give value to and make sense of the other activities, encourage guidance workers, and improve the quality of the service for its users. It may also provide evidence and arguments for better resourcing to cope with demand.

The strategy would also require the EGSA to **develop a positive approach to feedback**. The aim of feedback from an educational guidance service is to challenge the existing curriculum where it does not meet the needs of adults, and to support those developments that meet needs.

> *'...We are being asked to feed back students' feelings and impressions of the educational offer...(in some cases) we have difficulty in being constructive, because an institution we are engaged with may not actually be making any positive developments...Feedback is being able to critically engage in discussion for prospective students about the offer'.* (EGSA Co-ordinator)

All case study services stressed the need to respond positively to developments and changes in the curriculum which benefit adult learners. One service said that it was important to give support to colleagues working for change within the providing institutions, so that they in turn would support the EGSA in its feedback, which would be necessary particularly when the feedback issues were difficult.

In order to make feedback effective the EGSA needs to develop helpful rather than critical approaches to institutions while still leaving the opportunity to raise difficult issues. This means that the EGSA needs to make clear to the institution what it has to offer – in terms of information, training skills, etc. – and also that the EGSA should be ready to accept challenging feedback from the provider in its turn.

EXAMPLE 4

Request for evidence to support the need for childcare facilities at a college

At the EGSA management committee, a college representative asked the EGSA to provide statistical information about the need for childcare facilities for adults wishing to study, in order to back up a proposal being made within the college. However, another member of the management committee (not an EGSA staff member) responded that the college did not need such evidence, and had been told many times how to set up childcare facilities but lacked the will to do it.

The college representative found this response unhelpful; on further investigation it turned out that the college did need statistical evidence and the request was made again to the EGSA at a meeting of the open college consortium. The EGSA agreed to collect statistics that could be used by colleges.

The interviewee drew two conclusions from this example: feedback which 'blames' the college for its lack of action is not likely to encourage change; while in many cases informal feedback contacts are important, there are occasions when the college needs to take a more formal approach, with appropriate preparation.

If the EGSA is to develop a proactive strategy to deliver a service which includes feedback activity, then there are certain basic points it will need to address:

- The service needs to have **clearly defined aims and priorities**. Feedback should be a priority in the strategy.
- The service needs to be **accessible to adults**, particularly those in target groups, e.g. unemployed/unwaged; this involves questions of premises, and the balance of activities in the delivery of the service, including outreach work by guidance workers.
- The service needs to **develop links and collaborative work** with community organisations, educational outreach workers and other projects working in the field, as well as with courses designed to enable adults to identify their learning needs, such as Return to Learning courses; this would enable guidance and other workers to share their experience, and adult learners to have access to depth and continuity of educational guidance.
- The service needs to be seen by **unemployed and unwaged adults as relevant to their needs**; a service that is perceived as mainly concerned with higher education may serve only a limited number of unemployed and unwaged people in this respect.
- The **independence of the service** needs to be maintained, so that its guidance to individuals and groups is impartial and its feedback is independent.
- The service needs to **give sufficient emphasis to counselling** as the key activity in enabling adults to identify and articulate their learning needs.
- **Users should be encouraged to evaluate the EGSA's service**, e.g. through follow-up activities such as regular questionnaires, research projects, involvement of users in the advisory/management committees.
- The service needs to **set aside sufficient time for feedback** activity.
- Approaches to institutions should be **helpful rather than critical** and EGSAs need to ensure that providers are aware of the services they can offer.

- Guidance workers need **access to staff development and training** for feedback activity.
- The service needs to ensure that its **management structures provide support for EGSA staff** engaged in feedback.
- The service needs to **secure adequate resources** to deliver the strategy; this will involve seeking support from other organisations including providers, open college networks, etc., to back up negotiations with funding bodies.
- The service should encourage the development of **educational guidance networks** and seek to play a central co-ordinating role in the networks.

3.2 Providing the Evidence for Feedback

From its guidance work with individuals and groups, the EGSA will need to record relevant information so that it has sufficient evidence on which to base the feedback issues.

In fact guidance workers will know many of the issues well without any record-keeping, because of the patterns that emerge from their work (eg the need for childcare, or for finance), and they can and frequently do feed back this **'impressionistic'** sense of the shortcomings of the existing provision. A strategy for effective feedback, nevertheless, will require **quantifiable information** particularly if it is to make an impact on those areas of the curriculum that are least susceptible to change.

3.2.1 Information systems

EGSAs will generally need to maintain information systems covering three broad areas:

(i) Information on the education and training **curriculum** including:

- learning opportunities;
- student support systems, e.g. finance, childcare, disability, support services within providers;
- qualifications, accreditation;
- curriculum decision-making processes in education and training providers;
- evaluation of learning opportunities (e.g. evaluations of provision by students), information used by providers for monitoring provision (e.g. information on students' outcomes/destinations);
- policy on education and training for adults.

(ii) Information that is **work related**: e.g.

- unemployment figures, locally and nationally;
- labour market information, including skills gaps;
- careers information relevant to adults.

(iii) Information obtained from **users** for the purpose of:

- helping the individual user, e.g. guidance workers' case notes;
- managing the service (e.g. monitoring the delivery of the service, target groups);
- FEEDBACK.

In order to determine whether learning opportunities are appropriate for their users, EGSAs will need **detailed information on provision**, so that the existing provision can be evaluated against their users' needs. Guidance workers spend a great deal of time attempting to obtain this information from providers. This represents a wasteful use of the EGSAs' scarce resources. While it is the responsibility of the EGSA to make its information needs known to the providers, it is the responsibility of the providers to disseminate information about learning opportunities.

3.2.2 Information obtained from users

The three case study EGSAs collected information on users and their needs, in order both to monitor the delivery of the service and also to identify unmet needs that were common to their users. This information could then be used as 'evidence' in the feedback process.

Systems developed in the three services included:

- day books, where enquiries were logged on a daily basis;
- standard forms to record data about individual enquirers;
- a coding system for recording unmet needs and barriers, which enabled information to be retrieved more readily for feedback purposes and cut out time-consuming scanning of record sheets (EGSA B only);
- feedback record forms (EGSA A – see Appendix V) [21];
- a computer database for storing information for the purpose of monitoring the service and feedback (being developed in EGSA B).

EGSAs will need to design the forms which they use to record information from interviews with enquirers, and their systems of storing such information, in such a way that information relevant to feedback is easily identifiable.

Table 2 shown on the following page provides a model of processing information about users.

Table 2 – Processing Information about Users

3.2.3 Difficulties

One of the difficulties in transforming information from interviews with users into quantifiable data was outlined by one EGSA in the distinction between **'hard' and 'soft'** information.

'Hard' information is information that can be quantified, such as:

- characteristics of users: sex, age, employment status, area of residence, ethnic group, etc
- information on demand: the kinds of education and training opportunities that users are seeking
- information on referral: which institutions and courses/learning opportunities EGSAs have referred users to
- feedback issues: gaps in or inflexibility of provision, quantifiable barriers to access such as lack of childcare or finance

There is a potential difficulty for the EGSA in providing **quantifiable data about demand**. Providers may require hard evidence of demand before resources can be secured to develop provision. In several cases in this research, this led to a situation where the provider was actually asking the EGSA to recruit a ready made group of students to a course; the corollary was that if the course failed to recruit, the EGSA was discredited. Clearly EGSAs are sometimes in contact with a definable group of potential learners, but this is not usually the case, and it is not appropriate for providers to hand over the responsibility for recruitment to EGSAs.

EXAMPLE 5

Planning a Return to Study course

A one-term Return to Study course had run three times in a further education college, and had then not continued because of a shortage of funds. It appeared that the money would be available to run the course again, and the course tutor telephoned the EGSA to ask for advice about the course (e.g. whether it was meeting needs, appropriate publicity, etc.) and whether the EGSA had any clients who could be referred to the course.

The response from the EGSA was described as very helpful, and the service was able to supply the college with names of prospective students to contact. However, the course fell through because in the end the funds were not available. The course tutor concluded that a more successful process of feedback would be for the EGSA to identify demand and provide information to the college. This would then create pressure within the college for provision to be developed. In this way, the EGSA would be able to offer support to colleagues within providers working to change the curriculum.

Accurate data on **patterns of referral** is useful for both EGSAs and providers to see how many clients are referred by EGSAs to particular institutions and courses/learning opportunities, and what characteristics the users have in common. This will become even more important where providers take on responsibility for funding EGSAs (a possible consequence of financial delegation to providers from local authorities in the Education Reform Act). Difficulties arise because it is not always clear to guidance workers what is a 'suggestion' to a user about a particular learning opportunity during the course of an interview, and what is a 'referral'. In order to provide useful information, the EGSA will need to be systematic in recording where it is clearly referring a user. The use of referral forms for the users to take to the institution may be one way of making the process more systematic.

'Soft' information is information that is based on the quality of the user's (or the guidance worker's) experience of an institution or some aspect of the curriculum. The EGSA may obtain information which is important to feed back but hard to quantify. This may include:

- class, cultural, race or gender barriers;
- poor teaching, administration or support;
- positive experiences.

The provider on the other hand may want information that is precise (e.g. in the case of a complaint or criticism of the service), on the grounds that it is difficult to respond positively and take appropriate action if the feedback is not precise. The experience of EGSAs in some cases, however, suggests that issues become blurred when the institution is defensive and seeking to discredit the 'evidence' and the 'witnesses', i.e. the users on which the feedback is based.

EXAMPLE 6

Difficulties with an access course

Students on an access course at a college of FE had complained to the EGSA about the workload and organisation of the course, and potential students had experienced delays in the processing of applications. After informal discussions by telephone, the EGSA wrote a detailed letter to the head of department, who then arranged a meeting with the EGSA at the college.

The response of the college was defensive – the department had been under pressure because of staff illness, and they had received similar complaints from other sources. The situation was complicated by the fact that one of the case studies selected by the EGSA was identified by the college as an 'unreliable witness' which enabled the college to question other parts of the evidence.

The college assured the EGSA that the complaints would be dealt with, and complaints from students decreased. However, the issue led to a period of poor relationships between the EGSA and college staff and referrals to the course decreased.

The EGSA had been under some pressure to avoid feeding back on this issue, because of the vulnerability of the provision within the college priorities. The example illustrated for the EGSA the importance of developing relationships based on trust with college staff at all levels, so that the EGSA would be listened to sympathetically when there was a serious issue to feed back.

When seeking to feed back complaints or criticisms of the service, the EGSA will need to:

- check what the enquirer wants;
- know what procedures the provider has for dealing with evaluation of provision, criticism, complaints;
- record the case as fully as possible;
- ensure that the enquirer's confidentiality is protected;
- find the most appropriate mechanism for feedback (see Chapter 3.3);
- present the case is such a way that the provider can take action, i.e. with clear information, using case studies where appropriate.

3.2.4 The use of computers

All the services agreed that the storage of information on users for monitoring the service and for feedback would be facilitated by the use of computers.

The EGSA in case study B was in the process of devising a **computerised system for storing information**, using as software a version of Dbase 3. Other EGSAs nationally were at the time of the research also developing computerised systems. It would seem to be the appropriate time for a national initiative to develop software that can be used by EGSAs for this purpose, e.g. through UDACE. Such an initiative would prevent wasteful duplication of work and provide services with a useful tool to make their feedback more effective. EGSAs will require resources to provide hardware, software and staff training to operate the system. [See 22, 23 for information technology in educational guidance.]

An information system which EGSAs can use for feedback will have the following requirements:

- It should be **simple to use**, i.e. not taking up too much staff time in recording, storing and retrieving information.
- It will need to be capable of producing **quantifiable information** for feedback on:
  - the characteristics of users;
  - patterns of demand;
  - patterns of referral;
  - unmet/inappropriately met needs and barriers to access.

- It should be capable of **correlating different categories of information**; the EGSA may wish to match a particular gap in provision with certain characteristics of users, e.g. age, sex, location etc.
- The EGSA will require information which is sufficiently **precise and detailed** to be of use to providers.
- The system should be able to **store qualitative information** for feedback (i.e. users' experiences of institutions and curricula) which may be used for case studies and reports, and provide a means of **relating the quantifiable to the qualitative information** if this is stored separately, e.g. with guidance workers' case notes. This may be necessary when the EGSA wishes to back up its quantifiable information with more detailed case studies.
- The confidentiality of users will need to be protected.

3.2.5 Information obtained by follow-up of enquirers

All three services commented on the importance of following-up their enquirers, but only one, EGSA B, had allocated the resources to do this on a regular basis. The service sent out a three-monthly follow-up letter and questionnaire to a substantial proportion of enquirers.

It is only through follow-up work that the EGSA can monitor the outcomes of its guidance; follow-up is therefore important both in evaluating the service itself and in providing information on the users' experiences of education and training provision for feedback.

EGSAs may wish to consider ways of obtaining this information by collaborating with providers and other agencies to develop monitoring and evaluation procedures.

3.2.6 Establishing the feedback issues

We have seen that EGSAs will need to record information on unmet and inappropriately met needs, barriers to access and positive curriculum developments as part of the information they have gathered from users. It is from this data that feedback issues will be established.

It is important to note that collecting information is not a passive process. EGSAs will have ideas about what issues they are looking for, and these will shape the process of collection. The code system used by EGSA B was helpful in identifying the feedback issues. Using a code system will be a key component of a computerised information system, enabling the EGSA to retrieve information relatively simply, and avoiding lengthy searches through case-notes for information to back up feedback.

Table 3 lists issues which the EGSAs aimed to feedback. Patterns of **frequency of feedback** on these issues differed across the case study EGSAs, reflecting their different priorities.

The list below indicates the range of issues which EGSAs considered appropriate to take up. Feedback activity had occured on most of these issues, although this does not indicate the impact of the feedback, which is described in later sections.

(i) **Development of new provision** for unemployed/unwaged adults.

(ii) **Modification of existing provision** to facilitate entry to unemployed/unwaged adults, e.g. flexible start dates, modular provision, facilities for people with disabilities, etc.

(iii) **Changes in regulations and procedures** which deter adults from taking up learning opportunities:

- **providers'** admissions requirements and procedures, e.g. entry qualifications, testing, publicity;
- **LEA** eligibility criteria and procedures, e.g. for awards and fees;
- **central government** requirements and eligibility criteria, e.g. DES awards and fees, Training Agency, social security;
- **regulations of other bodies**, e.g. professional bodies, validating bodies, clearing schemes, training boards.

(iv) The need to **provide support for adult students**, e.g. childcare, financial support, guidance, study skills.

(v) Reasons for **students' dissatisfaction with or withdrawal from learning opportunities**, e.g. students' experience of teaching, course organisation, equal opportunities.

(vi) The need to develop **provision that enables adult learners to have greater control over learning resources**.

(vii) Contributions to debates on education and training for adults.

Table 3 – The Range of Feedback Issues

For case study A the most frequent issues were changes in regulations and procedures, and in particular grants and fees regulations, and support for students. The service also did a significant amount of feedback on gaps in provision and modification of provision.

Case study B reported that the most frequent issues were student support, and modification of provision. As the budget restrictions of local providers had increased, there had been a shift of feedback from new provision to modification of existing provision. There was a significant amount of work

on students' dissatisfaction in which advocacy and feedback were sometimes hard to distinguish, and on discussions on structural reorganisation of education provision in the area.

It is clear from the list of issues in Table 3, that the **range of feedback** work is very wide, and that it will involve contact with agencies and organisations other than providers and LEAs, including national agencies (see Chapter 6). EGSAs therefore require inputs into educational guidance networks at local, regional and national levels.

EGSAs will need to review the information they are collecting regularly in order to identify those issues which need to be taken up as single issues, and which will form part of regular reports to institutions.

3.2.7 Written evidence

Feedback from EGSAs will need to be backed up by **written reports or statistics** as 'evidence'. The exact nature of this evidence will depend on the issue, but we can distinguish some general points:

- Issues relating to new provision, modifications to existing provision and support facilities such as childcare will require **statistical data about demand.**
- Institutions may benefit from regular information about **patterns of demand** expressed by EGSA users, and **patterns of referrals** from EGSAs to the institutions. It would be helpful in terms of curriculum planning to receive this information regularly, e.g. on a three-monthly basis, rather than in an annual report.
- Although annual reports were seen as useful, feedback issues could be highlighted more effectively by other means. In some cases short papers on specific issues, e.g. as part of a 'mini-campaign' would be helpful.

One EGSA (not in the case studies) had established a system of feedback using **reports**: a general report on feedback issues for the area, and confidential reports with specific issues for each of the main providers. The EGSA would then discuss the reports at meetings with senior management of the institutions [24]. This kind of mechanism was also seen as appropriate by some providers in the case studies.

- Where the feedback issue concerned a complaint or criticism of some aspect of an institution's service, the EGSA would need to make the information specific. This may be through a written report or case studies, depending on the seriousness of the issue and the formality of the feedback mechanism judged appropriate.

EXAMPLE 7

21 hour catering course

The EGSA wrote a paper on the need for provision for women which was taken by a head of area from the local adult education institute, who was a representative of the EGSA's management committee, and presented to a meeting of senior staff at the institute.

The EGSA was informed that some resources were available and asked to prioritise one course. The EGSA proposed a 21 hour catering course for black women, which was subsequently provided. The EGSA concluded that the provider had been able to respond in this case partly because the feedback offered a specific target.

3.3 Feedback Procedures

This section looks at the procedures required for setting up the feedback mechanisms and feeding back to providers.

3.3.1 Informal mechanisms

Informal contacts between guidance workers and staff in providers and other institutions were seen by the EGSAs as essential as a basis for feedback work. Contacts occurred through a variety of guidance activities, e.g. referrals, information work and advocacy as well as through informal feedback. The EGSAs became known to the providers and a basis of trust was established which lessened the likelihood of a defensive response from the institution if feedback was necessary on a sensitive issue. It was important for the EGSAs to establish these contacts at senior management as well as course tutor levels.

A great amount of feedback occurred through informal mechanisms, e.g. through phone contacts and informal meetings with course tutors and heads of department; personal contact with course tutors was seen as particularly important in enabling the EGSAs to have a clear picture of the provision which they were evaluating. However, it was clear from the case studies that such mechanisms would not achieve the objectives of the EGSAs on their own, and would need to be combined with other more formal mechanisms.

3.3.2 Key individuals

EGSAs commented on the need to identify key individuals within the providers, who understood the work of the EGSAs and were seeking to develop work with adults. Such individuals could act as a 'filter' – choosing the issue and the moment to push, or as an 'advocate' – arguing the case on behalf of the EGSA through formal and informal channels, or as an

'advisor' – a source of information about the people and curriculum development processes in the institution, and someone who could be approached by the EGSA on sensitive issues.

The need for allies within the institutions is particularly important where the EGSA does not have access to certain areas, e.g. senior management, staff in subject areas where there are few adult students.

EXAMPLE 8

Courses for women at a college of further education

The EGSA had identified a need to extend opportunities for women at a college of FE, and intended to use the opportunity presented by the issue to extend the service's influence within the college.

In collaboration with a senior lecturer in the college, the EGSA presented a paper outlining the issue to committees (equal opportunities, adult working party) and heads of department, some of whom had requested feedback from the EGSA.

After an initially positive response from the committees, the EGSA received no coherent response from senior management, and was unable to determine the extent of its impact on the curriculum. The hidden objective, of gaining more influence within the college, was unsuccessful, and the EGSA felt that it needed to develop allies within the college to extend its influence.

Key individuals, especially at senior levels, may be invaluable in establishing the credibility of the EGSA and aiding the negotiation of formal feedback mechanisms, but too much emphasis should not be placed on this element of the strategy – individuals move on. One EGSA described their relationship with a college as 'cyclical'; at one point the college would appear to be open to feedback, but then the situation would change as key individuals left and 'the walls were up again'.

3.3.3 Formal mechanisms

These were seen as essential by two of the case study EGSAs. For these services it was important to have access to senior management through formal meetings where minutes were taken. In this way feedback issues could be brought to the attention of staff with control over policy and resources, which was the most effective way of bringing about major changes. Informal feedback, though it occurred frequently, was seen as 'tinkering around the edges'.

The exception was case study C, where informal mechanisms were seen as the most effective, and while the formal mechanisms were frequently used, they were not necessarily seen as effective. However, EGSA C was also the least well-resourced of the services, and was an exception in other ways,

having a different management structure (see Appendix III) and fewer links with FE providers than the other services.

Formal mechanisms for feeding back to an institution included:

- **management/advisory committees**; appropriate representatives would be staff able to develop feedback activity within their institutions;
- **meetings with senior staff** set up for the purpose of feedback;
- **inputs into committee structures** where formal curriculum decision making occurs;
- **key posts** with responsibility for liaising with EGSAs and receiving and acting on feedback, e.g. marketing posts.

EXAMPLE 9

Revising a college prospectus

The college had produced a prospectus which had been difficult for the EGSA and enquirers to use, because it lacked an index ('to encourage people to browse') and needed to be translated into community languages. The college requested feedback on it from the EGSA.

The issue was discussed by the EGSA with the college marketing coordinator, who was a member of the EGSA's management committee. The EGSA then wrote to the college providing evidence which the marketing coordinator was able to use to convince her colleagues to make the appropriate changes.

Feedback was successful in this case because the college was looking for advice and it was done through staff who knew and supported the EGSA.

Effective mechanisms for feedback to providers are considered in detail in Chapter 4.5.

3.3.4 A model of effective feedback

It is worth noting here as a model of effective feedback the mechanisms used by case study B to feed back to two providers, an adult education institute and a college of further education. The EGSA had good informal links with both institutions, which were represented on the EGSA's management committee by senior staff.

The EGSA also had effective inputs into the curriculum development processes of the providers. In the AEI this was achieved through representation on the staff coordinating group (the central curriculum planning body) and the academic board.

In the college, the EGSA was able to make an impact through the adult working party, a cross-college body chaired by the vice-principal (curriculum and resources) and reporting to the course development sub-committee of the academic board. The working party had a record of stimulating the development of learning opportunities for adults and of raising the profile of adults within the college. As a result of participation on the working party and other contacts the EGSA had recently been invited to be represented on the course development sub-committee. In this way the EGSA's feedback was able to have an impact at the heart of the institution's curriculum planning process.

It was clear from interviews with providers that such opportunities had to be earned and would need careful negotiation. Representation on formal committees also requires a great deal of staff time; not all EGSAs will be able to sustain this level of participation, and other mechanisms may be more appropriate, e.g. formal meetings arranged for feedback on specific issues.

3.3.5 The range of mechanisms

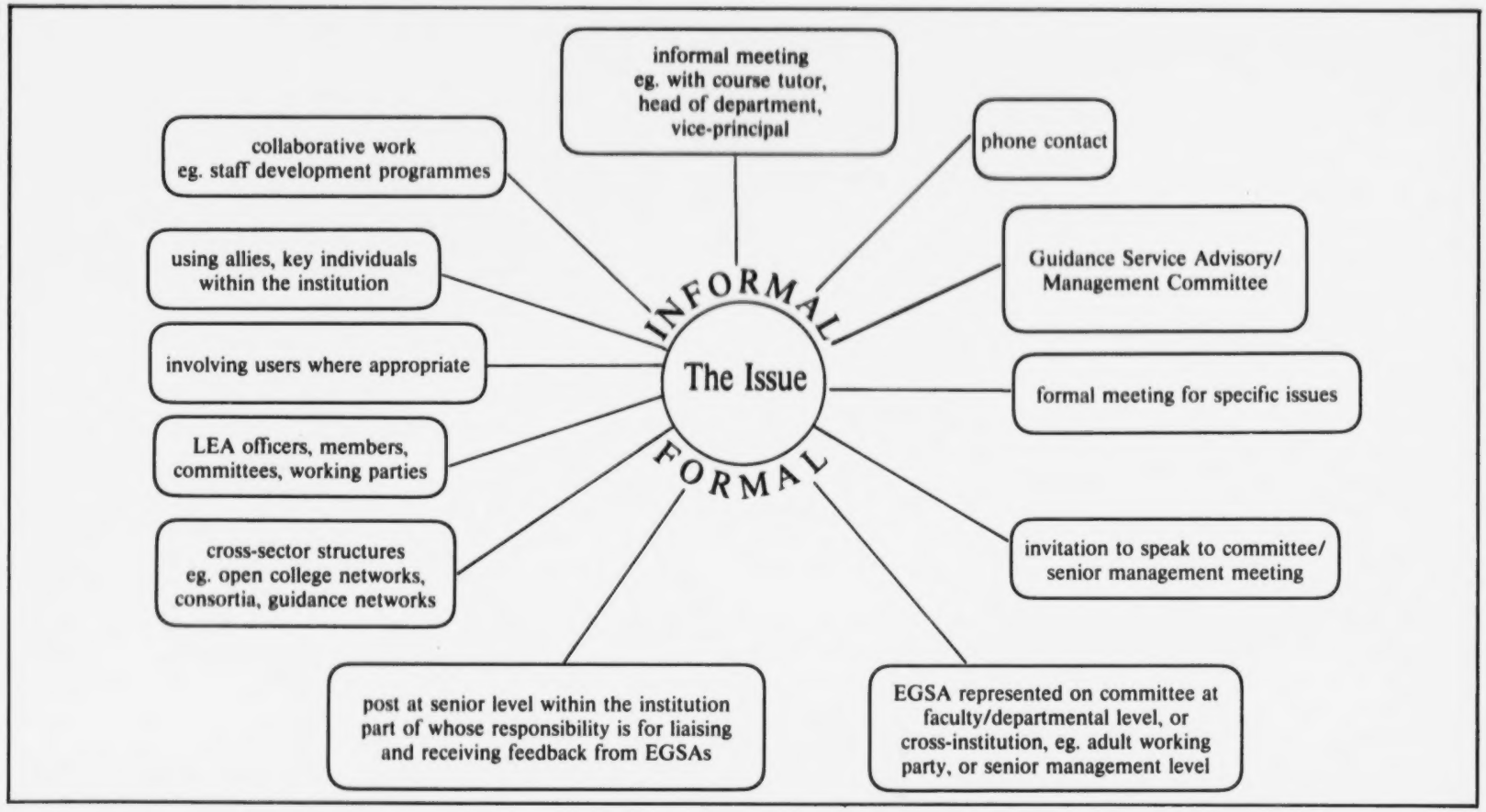
The process of feedback is a dynamic one, and new mechanisms are likely to emerge through the activity of feedback. It is clear from the case studies that it is not possible to formulate a model mechanism which will be appropriate for every case. EGSAs will instead need a range of mechanisms from which they can select according to the issue and the target institution (see Table 4).

3.3.6 Feeding back

The activity of feeding back can be demanding on the EGSA both in the amount of time it takes to follow through issues and in the level of skills required of staff engaged in feedback. EGSAs are small organisations attempting to make an impact usually on large institutions. The credibility of the EGSA often therefore depends on the way that its staff carry out the activity of feedback.

Guidance workers need to develop a range of **negotiating skills**, including strategic planning, defining objectives, pursuing them with determination, and being assertive. Issues sometimes need to be handled with care, and staff need to know when to raise issues, who to approach, and which mechanisms will be effective. They must decide when it is appropriate to persuade and when to confront. All this requires a high degree of 'political sophistication' as one interviewee described it.

Table 4 – The Range of Mechanisms



In **choosing the issue** to feed back, the EGSA will need to balance the short-term objective (a particular change in the curriculum) against the long-term strategy. This may involve going for a change that is achievable, without losing sight of wider aims, eg major shifts in the curriculum for adult learners. Or it may be that the EGSA decides that the importance of a particular issue outweighs the risk of damage to its relationship with the provider, and goes ahead with the feedback.

The EGSA will need to **be clear about its objectives**. This will enable the EGSA to make the feedback specific and help in evaluating the success of the feedback at a later stage. There may be more than one objective in a particular case; for example, the EGSA may be seeking to extend its influence with the provider and make further feedback possible.

Having chosen the issue and the target institution, the EGSA needs to **select appropriate mechanisms** for feeding back. These will depend on the nature of the issue, the institution that the EGSA is feeding back to, and the relationship between the EGSA and the institution.

Most examples of feedback given by interviewees required a combination of mechanisms which included both informal and formal routes. The EGSA will need to consider how the issue will be progressed through the provider's decision-making process. The service may have effective inputs to this process, or may need to seek a special meeting for the issue. The question of allies within the institution may be important.

The EGSA will need to **anticipate the provider's response**. The service may consider how far its own aims and those of the institution coincide.

EXAMPLE 10

Timetabling of courses to enable adults to take part

The EGSA had been involved in advocacy with a polytechnic to enable an enquirer to study on a BTEC Higher National course under the 21 hour rule. The EGSA then wished to persuade the institution to re-timetable the course to allow similar flexibility for subsequent applicants, and at the same time use the opportunity to raise the awareness of the needs of unemployed adults across the polytechnic.

The EGSA arranged a meeting with the dean of school, which led to a change of policy within the school and had a knock-on effect on other schools. The EGSA concluded that the impact was due in part to the positive attitude of the provider's staff member.

If the issue is a sensitive one, e.g. involving criticism of the provision or staff, the strength of the existing relationship with the provider will be an important factor. If the issue is familiar to the provider (eg the need for childcare facilities), it may see the EGSA as wasting its time (the response of one interviewee), or alternatively it may seek the EGSA's support. In

some instances the provider is likely to be interested only in student numbers.

The EGSA will also need to consider the timing – how it can maximise impact by fitting in with the institution's curriculum planning timetable.

There are also choices to be made about **how to communicate the issues**. As feedback is often embedded in other activities, particularly at the informal level, the EGSA will need to signal to the provider that it has a feedback issue to communicate. Communication needs to be as clear and specific as possible (it is difficult to respond with appropriate action to feedback that is vague).

The EGSA will need to consider at what point to put issues in writing (see Chapter 3.2.7). Formal committees and other meetings will be minuted. If the EGSA is represented on a committee/working party, it would be useful to establish a standing item for feedback on the agenda.

The EGSA may consider whether to **involve users directly** in feedback. EGSAs reported that this had been effective in some cases to highlight issues as part of a public campaign, e.g. through newspaper articles and other media. There are dangers in this approach however, as individual users can sometimes suffer discrimination or be labelled 'troublemakers' as a result.

3.4 Monitoring and Evaluating Feedback

At the final stage of the process, monitoring and evaluating, the EGSA can draw conclusions from its activity and review its strategy for feedback. This aspect of the feedback process should be **part of a wider process of monitoring and evaluating the delivery of the service**, and needs to be incorporated into the activities of the service from the outset.

Evaluation of feedback needs to take place at two levels – evaluating particular examples of feedback, and reviewing the overall strategy.

It will involve **distinguishing feedback from other activities** (the case studies showed that much feedback was embedded in other activities) and keeping a record of it. Any system of record-keeping would need to be simple, e.g. a form with a checklist of questions; an example of this was in case study A (see Appendix V) [21].

We have said that effective feedback will depend on the EGSA's having a proactive strategy and setting clear aims. Evaluating the strategy and examples of feedback involves measuring outcomes against aims. **Successful outcomes** would include:

- **Curriculum change**. All case study EGSAs agreed that this was the most important of the criteria for measuring the success of feedback. It meant making changes (including the development of policy) so

that adult learners could benefit from a curriculum that was more appropriate, accessible or empowering.

- **Raising awareness of the issues** concerning the learning needs of adults.
- **Making further feedback possible.**

In deciding whether feedback has been successful or unsuccessful, the EGSA needs to distinguish those factors which are its own responsibility from factors where the EGSA has little or no influence.

Inadequate resources, and lack of support from local authorities may make attempts at feedback ineffective. Similarly, it may be that however effective the EGSA is in its feedback activity, the impact on a provider may be limited, because the institution has other priorities and is unwilling to make changes, or to listen. In some cases it may not be easy to tell how much impact has been made as the provider may not respond directly to the feedback.

In examining the feedback activity, the service will need to make a **checklist of questions**, which may include:

- At the level of strategy:
  - Were aims and priorities set, which reflected the EGSA's policy, its clients' needs, and the balance of issues requiring feedback (short- and long-term)?
  - Was sufficient time made available?
  - Had the groundwork been done (i.e. building relationships with providers, letting them know what the service can offer, setting up mechanisms)?
- For the particular example of feedback:
  - Were the aims clear and realistic (i.e. could the EGSA reasonably expect to achieve them)?
  - Was the approach made in a way that could be seen as positive?
  - Were the provider's responses anticipated?
  - Were the mechanisms used appropriate?
  - Was the issue communicated in the most effective way?
  - Was the quality of information on unmet needs/barriers to access adequate?
  - Was the issue followed through?
  - Were staff given adequate support?
  - Are there training needs arising from the feedback?
  - Was the feedback activity adequately recorded?
  - What were the main reasons for success or lack of success of the feedback?
  - What conclusions can be drawn?

Outcomes of evaluation. Evaluation of the feedback process will enable the EGSA to:

- Revise its strategy, set fresh priorities, identify staff training needs and engage in further feedback activity.
- Negotiate increased resources where necessary, using the conclusions drawn from the evaluation of feedback as evidence both of the need for further resources and support, and also of the potential uses of feedback.
- Accept feedback on the EGSA's own service from providers, other agencies and users, by becoming more aware of the process.

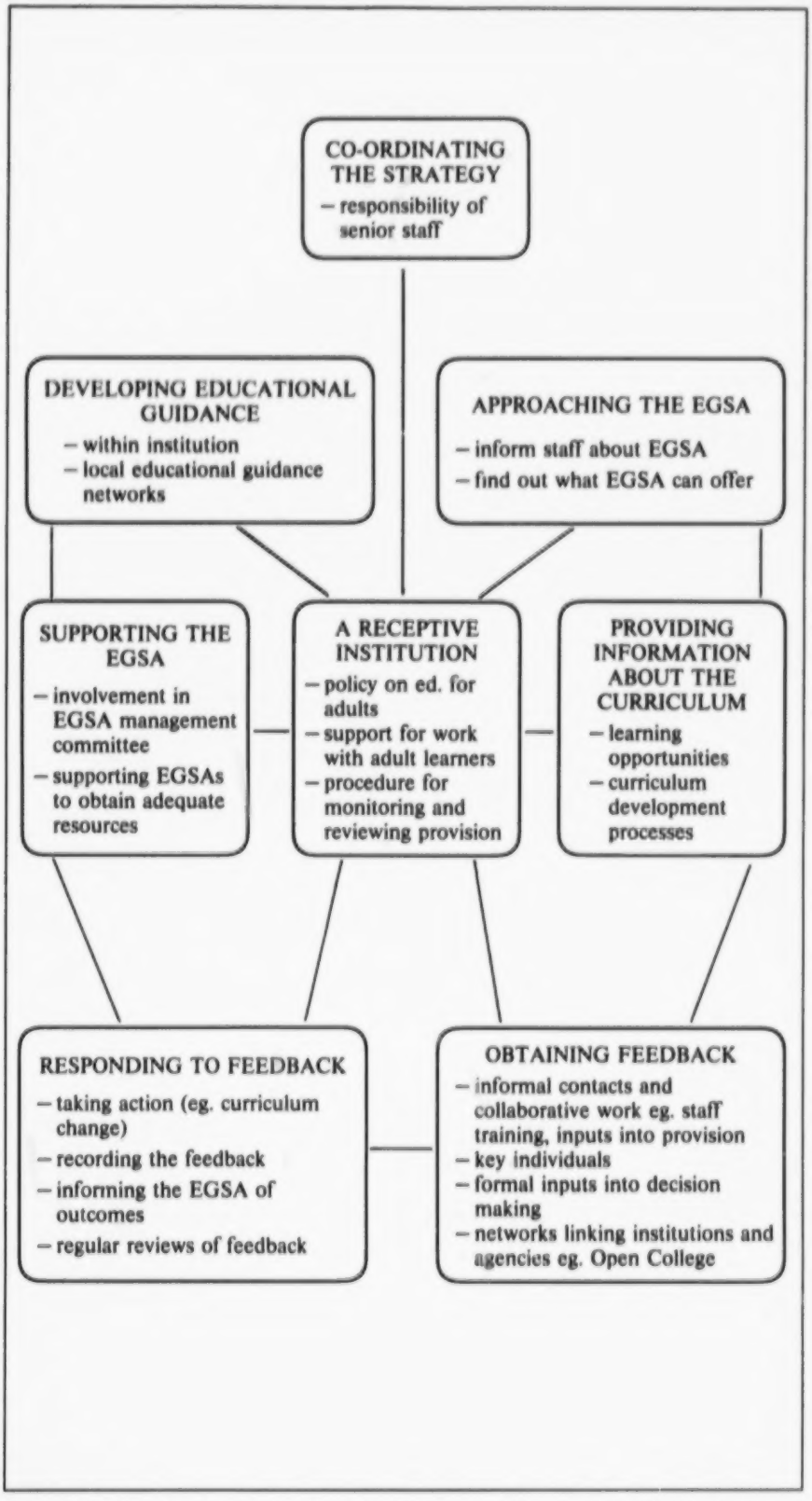

CO-ORDINATING THE STRATEGY
– responsibility of senior staff
DEVELOPING EDUCATIONAL GUIDANCE
– within institution
– local educational guidance networks
APPROACHING THE EGSA
– inform staff about EGSA
– find out what EGSA can offer
SUPPORTING THE EGSA
– involvement in EGSA management committee
– supporting EGSAs to obtain adequate resources
A RECEPTIVE INSTITUTION
– policy on ed. for adults
– support for work with adult learners
– procedure for monitoring and reviewing provision
PROVIDING INFORMATION ABOUT THE CURRICULUM
– learning opportunities
– curriculum development processes
RESPONDING TO FEEDBACK
– taking action (eg. curriculum change)
– recording the feedback
– informing the EGSA of outcomes
– regular reviews of feedback
OBTAINING FEEDBACK
– informal contacts and collaborative work eg. staff training, inputs into provision
– key individuals
– formal inputs into decision making
– networks linking institutions and agencies eg. Open College

Table 5: A Strategy for Institutions to Obtain and Respond to Feedback

CHAPTER 4

OBTAINING AND RESPONDING TO FEEDBACK (THE PROVIDERS' PERSPECTIVE)

This section considers the providers' role in making feedback from EGSAs effective. Chapters 4.1 and 4.2 consider the curriculum development process and the contribution that EGSAs can make to the curriculum. A strategy for providers to obtain and respond to feedback is outlined in Chapter 4.3 to 4.6 and summarised in Table 5.

Any discussion of how feedback can make an impact on the curriculum leads directly to the question – where are decisions made within the institution? Providers will need to explain their formal and informal curriculum decision making processes in order to enable EGSAs to understand and influence curriculum development.

4.1 Curriculum Development

Curriculum development is the process by which learning opportunities are provided and, according to the wide definition of curriculum used for this research, it involves the whole range of the learner's experience from the first contact with publicity and guidance to the outcomes of a learning opportunity. Interviews for this research were conducted with members of staff in institutions providing adult, further and higher education in the three case study areas.

It was clear that very different processes take place in the different sectors, with variations depending on the level and source of funding required, the involvement of validating bodies/exam boards, the formality and timescale of the institution's decision-making processes (in HE/vocational FE/adult continuing education), and the nature of the client group (e.g. unemployed adults using adult basic education, mature students entering HE).

4.1.1 Education for adults

Institutional arrangements covered in the interviews included departments within FE colleges mainly or wholly concerned with education for adults (case studies A & C), a separate AE institute (case study B), and a 'Pioneer Team' developing work with adults, part of a university extra-mural department (case study A).

These institutions in many cases placed a high value on negotiating with learners to identify and meet their learning needs as part of curriculum development. The approach to curriculum development was therefore close to the values and methods of the EGSAs themselves.

The institutions had developed mechanisms for involving local communities; these included area meetings, advisory boards, and participation in consortia involving community organisations. These mechanisms enabled EGSAs to make an input into curriculum development, and there were a number of examples of collaboration between EGSAs and institutions.

EXAMPLE 11

'Opportunities for Women' course

One of the EGSA outreach workers was in contact with women who were in poorly-paid part-time work in factories, mail-order firms and school catering and cleaning, and who had expressed an interest in returning to education, but were unclear about what kind of course they needed. The worker met with the local Community Education development team to discuss setting up a part-time course that would provide them with a group experience rather than individual guidance and offer a taster of different learning opportunities that they could take up more fully on another course.

A short course was set up by the development team and ran successfully several times. The EGSA staff were closely involved both in the initial planning and providing inputs to the course. This was part of a significant development across the area, and was one factor influencing the decision of providers to offer return to study courses as part of their mainstream provision.

As part of a strategy for feedback, EGSAs needed to be aware of the planning timetable for the institutions' annual programme. In this sector particularly, institutions were able to respond quickly to certain demands, e.g. by setting up short courses at certain points in the year.

4.1.2 Further education

Curriculum programme planning in Non-Advanced Further Education has become more standardised nationally, as local authorities have been required to draw up three year Work-Related NAFE Plans and annual pro-

grammes in consultation with the Manpower Services Commission (now the Training Agency). This has resulted in developments that were significant for feedback in the case studies. In some cases the course team/tutor was required to complete a course approval form as part of the curriculum development procedures. This form included a section on market research information on demand obtained from relevant local organisations, and EGSAs had been consulted as part of this process.

Interviewees emphasised that it was important for feedback from EGSAs to be synchronised with the programme planning timescale. In one example the internal process of course approval involved submissions from departments to a course development sub-committee of the academic board. This process had to be completed by December; the annual review meeting between the college and the authority took place in January/February for the programme beginning the following September. It would be counter-productive for EGSAs to ignore that cycle.

4.1.3 Higher education

Interviews were held with staff in two polytechnics and one university. While the curriculum development processes differed between the polytechnics and the university, e.g. the university schools appeared to have more autonomy than their polytechnic counterparts, they were similar in two respects – the formal processes were complex and involved a long planning cycle.

Course approval could take up to two years and would involve negotiation with both funding and validating bodies. Major course reviews in some cases took place every five years, although monitoring and review procedures were beginning to take place more frequently.

EGSAs involved in feedback to HE institutions would therefore need to take into account the constraints of the curriculum development process in this sector.

4.2 How Feedback from EGSAs can Contribute to Curriculum Development

Interviewees in the case studies emphasised that providers developed the curriculum in response to the needs of the whole community. In doing so, they were in contact with a range of organisations and sought feedback from them about their client groups. EGSAs were one source of information among many others. However, as one interviewee put it, from the EGSAs a more 'informed response' could be expected, since their main function was educational guidance, and a central aim was to feed back to providers. The EGSAs would provide information about the learning needs of local residents, especially those who were not traditionally users of education and training opportunities.

4.2.1 Information and support from EGSAs

From the evidence of the case studies, providers were able to obtain a number of different kinds of information and support from EGSAs.

- Information on overall **patterns of demand and referral**. EGSAs recorded information on who their enquirers were, what they were asking for, and where the EGSAs were referring them. This information was included in annual reports, and in one case at the request of colleges, the EGSA was supplying the information on a three-monthly basis.

- Information on **unmet or inappropriately met needs**. EGSAs were able to identify gaps in provision, or find out where the provision was inappropriate for their enquirers because of the way that it was delivered (e.g. start dates, timetabling etc). Increasingly, this use of feedback from EGSAs was becoming formalised in curriculum planning and review processes:

  'All curriculum submissions have sections where we have to record any perceived needs, e.g. equal opportunities needs. We can get information from the EGSA's annual report or by talking to the EGSA directly.'
  [Adult Studies Tutor, FE college]

- Information on **barriers that deter adults from taking up learning opportunities**, e.g. finance, childcare, DHSS regulations. Providers in the case studies used the EGSAs to support campaigns and initiatives to improve facilities for adult learners, and for advice in areas that they were less familiar with (e.g. 21 hour regulations, discretionary awards).

- Information on **how the institution was perceived by adults in the community**. This included impressions made on adult learners in their first contacts with institutions, the effectiveness of publicity, and cases where the learner was dissatisfied with the institution's provision. One of the case study EGSAs regularly obtained information from follow-up surveys of its enquirers.

EXAMPLE 12

College response to initial enquiries

The issue arose from a telephone enquiry to the college made by one of the EGSA's clients. The college switchboard was unable to tell the enquirer whether a particular course waas running or who might have that information. This occurred at a time when there was a considerable debate about how the college related to the public, e.g. through its telephone advice line, which had not been successful.

The particular issue was raised by the EGSA coordinator in a phone-call to the head of department responsible for adult studies, who then raised the issue with the chief administrative officer, the relevant course tutor and other heads of department.

As a result of the discussion, the college reviewed the system of support for clerical staff dealing with initial enquiries. Wider questions arising from the discussion, such as the need for new switchboard equipment, and guidelines for the provision of information across the area, were dependent on resources and support from the local authority.

The EGSA's contribution was seen as useful, in that they were acting as an advocate for the public, whereas a member of the public would not bother to phone back when they got an unsatisfactory response from the college. However, the effectiveness of the feedback depended on the good relationship between the EGSA and the head of department; if the EGSA had been unknown to the college its feedback might have been ignored.

- Information on **statutory and voluntary sector provision and contacts across the area**. In all three case studies providers had used the comprehensive information systems maintained by EGSAs to obtain information about provision outside their own institutions.
- **Support for curriculum development and opportunities for joint work**. Interviewees frequently stressed the importance of having support outside the institution, from a local community focus, to provide evidence and exert pressure in order to make changes to the curriculum. Collaboration between institutions was also seen as valuable, with the EGSAs as partners or catalysts.
- **Staff development and advice** on issues relating to the learning needs of adults and educational guidance. Providers talked of the benefits of involving EGSA workers in staff development exercises, where their experience of working with adults individually and in groups was found to be useful.

The above list is an indication of areas that providers in the case studies found feedback from EGSAs to be helpful. It is sometimes assumed that

EGSAs are not resourced to provide such feedback, but low expectations of EGSAs will not help to improve the service. Rather than assuming that EGSAs cannot contribute to curriculum development, providers could approach EGSAs to find out what they can offer, and at the same time support their endeavours to obtain sufficient resources to carry out feedback effectively.

EXAMPLE 13

Review of childcare provision at a polytechnic.

A polytechnic was reviewing its creche facilities. The access coordinator telephoned the EGSA for information about demand. The response from the EGSA was seen as positive, providing general impressionistic information. Statistical information would have been useful but the EGSA would need time to provide this. The information was used as part of the polytechnic's review report.

The access coordinator considered going back to the EGSA to ask for statistical evidence, but felt that it would be hard for them to quantify (i.e. numbers of people who were deterred from studying at the polytechnic because of the lack of childcare facilities). The example illustrated for the interviewee how the EGSA was used to confirm what the polytechnic was trying to prove, rather than for more open-ended guidance.

4.2.2 The FEU model of curriculum development

This model contains five main elements: a cycle with four stages – Values and Needs, Design, Implementation, and Evaluation and Review – with a fifth component, Support Systems, linking with each stage. It offers a framework for seeing curriculum development at different levels, from the strategy of a local authority, through the programme planning of an education or training institution, to the development of a particular learning opportunity.

The version of the model in Table 5 shows that feedback from EGSAs can be used by providers to inform all the stages of the curriculum development cycle, at the level of individual courses or learning opportunities, and of the overall programme.

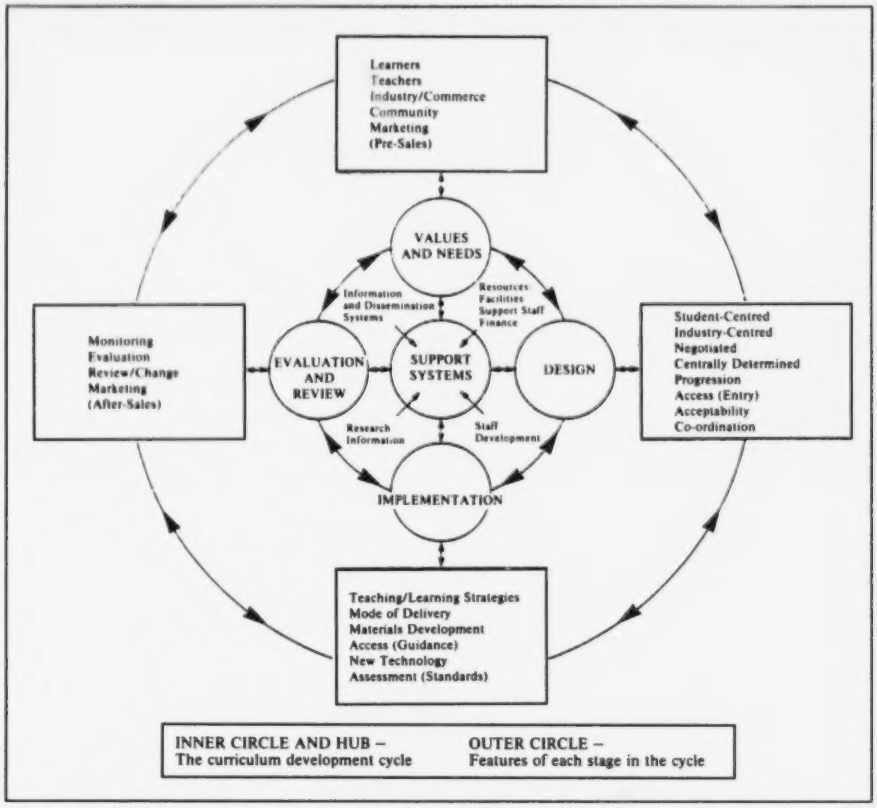


Table 6 – Processes of Curriculum Development: FEU Model

Feedback from the EGSA can contribute to:

Values and needs

- information on patterns of demand and referral
- feedback on unmet needs
- information on provision and contacts across the area

Design

- how needs can be met appropriately
- information on barriers to access

Implementation

- opportunities for working jointly with the EGSA

Evaluation and review

- how the institution is perceived by adult learners
- follow-up research on EGSA users
- feedback on students who have withdrawn from provision

Support Systems

- contribution to staff development on guidance/needs of adult learners
- feedback on issues of support for adult learners
- feedback on publicity and dissemination systems

4.2.3 The impact of feedback from the EGSAs

The research revealed a different pattern of impact in the case study areas.

Case studies A & B

The EGSAs in **these areas** had closest links with AE institutes, community education projects, and AE departments of FE colleges or sections working mainly with adults. There were many examples of effective feedback through a variety of mechanisms. One interviewee commented on the 'new tradition' of contacts, an informal network of colleagues involved in educational work with adults across the area.

Interviewees were conscious that, although in most FE institutions adults may be attending many different kinds of courses, the strongest links with EGSAs were in areas designated as 'adult education' or as a provision for adult returners. In some institutions the different philosophy and methods of delivery of work with adults was emphasised by the location of the provision in separate premises. The impact of feedback from EGSAs was significant in these areas but did not in all cases spread across the curriculum as a whole.

Direct contact between EGSAs and HE institutions for feedback was limited, partly as a result of low expectations on the providers' part. EGSA users were generally not seen as direct clients for HE, although this pattern might change:

> *'In most of our work, the group that's left out are the students or potential students; we talk about them as if we understood them. Our links will still be strongest with provider institutions feeding in until or unless we are recruiting off the street. But most people who go to the EGSA can only just about bring themselves to go to the fourth floor of the library; the thought of coming onto the university campus and saying 'what about me?' wouldn't occur to them – that's what we've got to overcome.'* [HE Director of Continuing Education]

The appointment of a project worker to look at access issues in HE institutions in case study A during the course of the research had resulted in significant feedback activity from the EGSA.

Case study C

Case study C reveals a different pattern. Here the EGSA was located on a polytechnic campus, and the EGSA director was a member of the polytechnic's staff. The EGSA had close informal links with the polytechnic. Interviewees found it difficult to distinguish the influence of the service from that of the director who, as the member of staff responsible for continuing education in the polytechnic, had been influential both in raising the profile of mature students and in setting up provision for adults. Interviewees in the FE colleges on the other hand reported very little impact on their curricula from the EGSA.

4.2.4 The credibility of EGSAS

The impact of feedback from EGSAs in the case studies also depended on their credibility with the providers. This depended on a number of factors.

- Whatever else they had to offer, the value of the EGSAs was dependent on the **referral of their enquirers** to the providers. The number of referrals was one measure of effectiveness:

  'We tend to measure success by how many people have been referred. It's not the be all and end all, but colleagues tend to say "That was good, I got several people referred by the EGSA" or the reverse "I let them know and nobody turned up" and so we think feedback is working because people are attending what's there' (Course Tutor, FE college)

Other interviewees stressed the appropriateness of referrals and the accuracy of information given to enquirers during the guidance process as important factors in establishing the credibility of the EGSAs.

- Another main factor was the the question of **how far the EGSA was seen as representing the community**, or its target groups, e.g. unemployed/unwaged adults, black and ethnic minority groups.

EXAMPLE 14

A course in computers for bilingual women

The EGSA telephoned the coordinator of the unemployed project at an adult education institute with a request for a course in computers for a group of bilingual women who were meeting in a community centre.

Initially the institute referred the women to its existing computer courses, but the travelling distance made this impractical. The EGSA informed the community centre of the situation, and the centre then wrote to the institute with details of the group's needs. It was not possible to provide training at the community centre because of the equipment. Further negotiation between the community centre and the institute led to a course being set up at an institute site near the community centre.

During these negotiations, the EGSA enquired informally about the progress of the request. Its role as a mediator between the community centre and the institute was seen by the provider as helpful, and the persistence of the EGSA, the community centre and the women themselves resulted in provision which at first seemed unlikely.

- **Location** was a key question in two case studies. In one, the EGSA was located on the premises of a higher education institution and was perceived by staff in further education as mainly concerned with HE (despite the fact that the enquiries recorded by the EGSA spanned all

sectors, see Appendix III). In the other case, the EGSA was located in the centre of the city, and staff in colleges in neighbouring towns talked of the '10 mile gap' which prevented some adults from having access to the service.

- Interviewees felt that the **independence of the EGSAs** was an important factor, which distinguished them from in-house advice units and in some cases from other advice services funded by local authorities. This was seen as significant both for the guidance available to individuals and also for the feedback of the service.
- Credibility also depended on the **quality of the EGSA's organisation and the experience of its staff**. One interviewee remarked on the 'well-deserved reputation for professional capability' of the EGSA's staff.
- Having sufficient **time for staff to attend meetings** was a key factor in establishing credibility. The 'unfailing attendance of the EGSA at the adult working party' was noted by one interviewee. It was important to follow up issues and results were achieved by being persistent.

EXAMPLE 15

Creche facilities at a college of FE

The college requested feedback from the EGSA on the need for childcare for students. The EGSA made a verbal input to the equal opportunities committee which was drawing up a paper, and the EGSA was asked to present the paper to the governors.

The initial response of the college was positive, but the governors decided that resources could not be redirected towards childcare at a time when the college budget was being cut. The EGSA had been unable to attend the governors meeting; the example illustrated for the EGSA the need to secure sufficient staff time to follow through issues. It was also important to work jointly with college staff to achieve change.

One suggestion to improve communications was that the EGSA should designate a member of staff to be the contact person for a particular institution.

- A **helpful approach to feedback** on the part of the EGSA was seen as important in establishing credibility:

  'The overriding factor is the way in which the educational guidance service is perceived; if they are seen as essentially helpful, cooperative, they will be much more closely involved and listened to. Generally the EGSA has been thought to do a good job. Hence when it has wanted to challenge something it has not been chucked out.' (Head of School, FE college).

- Interviewees felt that it was important for the EGSAs to **understand the constraints** under which the providers worked, e.g. the different planning cycles, academic conditions and rates of response to demand in the different sectors of AE/FE/HE, and that colleges had responsibility for the curriculum at national, regional and local levels. 'Knowing and appreciating each partner's context' would make for effective feedback.

4.2.5 Funding of the EGSAs

Interviewees were aware that these suggestions had implications for the EGSAs' resources. Many felt that EGSAs should have permanent core funding and an increase in staffing. One interviewee suggested an optimum size of twelve staff, which would allow the service to contribute more fully across the area without losing the informality which was crucial to the service.

Others commented that EGSAs were vulnerable to 'takeovers' from other agencies, and suggested that local authorities should fund the services sufficiently for them to develop, but in a way that would secure their independence, e.g. through grant funding or a levy on the FE budget.

> *'There needs to be some way of establishing their independence at the same time as developing the continuity and quality of the provision. We tend to get it only by brutally exploiting the people who are prepared to work in these areas.'* (Head of Department, FE College)

The Education Reform Act 1988 will increase the financial independence of education and training institutions, by delegating the control of budgets to the governing bodies of providers. This has implications for the funding of educational guidance and EGSAs which has up to now been seen mainly as the local authorities' responsibility. Local authority budgets will decrease as a result of the new regulations, and therefore **providers will in future need to consider ways of contributing to this funding in partnership with local authorities**.

4.3 Developing a Strategy for Obtaining and Responding to Feedback

EGSAs can make a significant contribution to curriculum development, but the process needs to be initiated by the provider as well as by the EGSA, and to be systematically incorporated into the curriculum development processes of the institution. In order to make feedback effective, **providers will need to develop a proactive strategy for involving the EGSAs and responding to their feedback**. Interviewees commented on the need for concrete steps that could be achieved within the resources of both providers and EGSAs, but without unnecessarily limiting the dialogue through low expectations on either side.

4.3.1 Responsive institutions

Institutions have been faced with a period of shrinking resources and increasing scrutiny; a common theme running through the interviews was whether the institutions, or sections within them, had an **open or defensive outlook**. An open outlook was seen as being characterised by an awareness that curriculum development involved experimenting and an element of risk-taking. Feedback could be seen as a source of information which could lead to informed decisions about modification or new developments in the curriculum. A defensive outlook would mean that the institution was unwilling to experiment and preferred to maximise student numbers on existing courses. In such a context feedback from an EGSA may be an uphill struggle:

> *'The EGSA had a difficult start because in some quarters they were seen as a threat, taking away autonomy from the college. It is a credit to the EGSA that they have demonstrated over the years that that is not what they want to do.'* (Head of Division, FE college)

Example 16 describes how feedback from the EGSA was not in itself sufficient to convince sceptical college staff of the need for more flexible provision. Change occured, however, when the staff could see examples of provision that were working in practice and when the financial situation made such a change necessary.

EXAMPLE 16

The need for flexible start dates on courses for adults

The need for courses for adults starting at different points in the year had been raised by the EGSA through different channels (management committee, adult working party, annual report, meetings with staff, etc.) over a period of time. College staff were resistant to the idea, because they felt that for a course to be of value to the students it should last a year and be certificated rather than assessed by course profile.

The previous year a one-day per week course was set up, which students could join at any time of the year. However, the take-up was very low. In the meantime, provision run with MSC and other external funding had demonstrated the demand for short flexible provision. This indication of likely success, together with the need to reduce provision because of budget restrictions, enabled the existing return to learning and foundation courses for adults to be restructured in a modular form which was acceptable to the teaching staff.

The supporting evidence from the EGSA was useful, although the major factors influencing the curriculum were positive examples (successful provision) and financial pressures.

A number of factors within the institution will contribute to creating an 'open outlook' – a climate in which the institution can be receptive to feedback.

4.3.2 Policy on adult continuing education

Several interviewees emphasised the importance of policy on adult continuing education at an institutional level, providing a framework within which curriculum development took place. This could include policy on educational guidance, and make explicit the aims of the institution in seeking feedback from the EGSA. Such a policy would encourage the EGSA to have confidence that its feedback would be taken seriously by the institution.

4.3.3 Support for work with adult learners

In addition to policy making, there was a need for support for work with adult learners at all levels and across different curriculum areas of the institution. Many interviewees commented on the need to improve communication across their institutions so that information and ideas could be shared, rivalry between departments which wasted energy and resources could be checked and staff working with adult learners in particular could break out of the margins and take up a more central role in the institution's curriculum. Several interviewees stated that the strongly departmental structure of the institutions led to restrictions in the way that staff could respond to feedback:

> *'The college management is very keen that communication goes down the appropriate line of command; it is not welcomed if course tutors make direct contacts with outside organisations.'*
> (Course Tutor, FE college)

Institutions in the case studies had effectively involved staff in policy-making and curriculum development in education for adults through:

- establishing cross-institutional committees/working parties dealing with issues concerning the education of adults. These bodies included representation from senior management, and reported to the formal curriculum planning structures of the institution. A model of good practice is described in Chapter 3.3.4.
- providing a programme of staff development for teaching and administrative staff, which aimed to raise their awareness of the learning needs of adults, provide them with skills in educational guidance and increase their understanding of and participation in the curriculum development processes of the institution.
- setting up a newsletter for staff and students which aimed to improve the flow of communication across the college.

4.3.4 Curriculum review procedures

The process of feedback will also be made easier if staff are already familiar with procedures for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing their provision.

There are a number of pressures on institutions to improve their systems for curriculum review. It has been difficult for providers in further education to respond to criticisms of inefficiency [25] without adequate databases to refute the criticisms [26], i.e. systems giving information about 'quality control' derived from evaluation and monitoring of learning opportunities, including evaluation by learners.

Recent research in case study B emphasised the need for providers to be able to identify key groups of students (e.g. unemployed/unwaged adults) through their information systems [27].

EGSAs may contribute directly to such processes, e.g. through their own follow-up research, but systems of monitoring and evaluating also have an indirect benefit for the feedback process which is equally important:

> *'Quantitative feedback is useful and more straightforward; qualitative feedback is also extremely useful but more difficult, a delicate area; it only operates between consenting adults. It becomes less delicate if providers have good up-and-running monitoring and evaluation systems themselves. There is no reason why the EGSA should not input into that process, but where it doesn't exist, and the college is run more defensively, the EGSA's input may be seen as interfering'* (Head of Faculty, FE college)

As this interviewee pointed out, the effectiveness of feedback might depend on the internal evaluation processes of the provider.

It is possible for the provider to take a proactive role, and build into the planning and review **procedures a requirement that staff consult with EGSAs** and other relevant community-based organisations, as part of the design of their provision. In one example, course tutors were supplied with a standard checklist of questions to answer for each course, which required them to state whether they had consulted the EGSA about demand.

4.3.5 Approaching the EGSA

Institutions are likely to see a strategy for obtaining and responding to feedback as part of a wider **marketing strategy**. There are pressures on institutions to adopt a business-orientated approach to education, from government policy and from changes in student demand.

There are some difficulties with this approach, in the context of seeking feedback from organisations such as EGSAs, arising from the different values and culture associated with marketing. The concepts and terminology of marketing originate from the world of business. Marketing is an umbrella term, which includes the activities of market research, promotion and selling. It can also involve the creation and shaping of demand. Interviews with guidance workers suggested that EGSAs had considerable experience of being seen by providers as a sales outlet, and were

understandably cautious about marketing strategies that were based on promoting existing provision, rather than listening to what adults were saying about their needs.

However, the shift towards market research that is occurring in providers' curriculum development processes will involve the institutions in seeking and responding to information about the learning needs and wants of their clients, including adult learners. This situation may strengthen the position of adult learners in the curriculum development process – one of the aims of the EGSAs – and could provide fruitful opportunities for feedback. [See 26 for a discussion of the concept of marketing].

In order to make the strategy effective, the provider will need to:

- **inform staff across the institution about the EGSA**, and encourage them to make informal contacts with it; these contacts will be important in establishing a foundation for further feedback work;
- **make a formal approach to the EGSA**, at a senior level, to find out what services and skills the EGSA can offer and what information and support it requires from the provider.

4.4 Providing Information about the Curriculum

4.4.1 Information about learning opportunities

EGSAs require detailed information on provision in order to determine whether the learning opportunities provided are appropriate to the needs of their enquirers. Guidance workers in the case study EGSAs reported that they spent a great deal of time attempting to obtain this information from providers.

The providers in the case study areas were asked to describe the process of disseminating information about provision. The pattern varied according to how strong the links were between the EGSA and the providers, and on the credibility of the EGSA to the providers. In those areas where the links were strongest, the providers took the initiative and sent certain types of information (e.g. prospectuses) without being requested to do so. Other providers expected even prospectuses to be requested and collected by the EGSA. In many cases, course tutors working in areas with a high proportion of adult learners sent course leaflets automatically to the EGSAs. However, very few institutions had a central coordinating system of disseminating information about provision, and they could therefore not be sure that the information the EGSA was obtaining was complete.

Providers clearly have a problem with information about learning opportunities because it is inherently volatile, particularly when institutions respond flexibly to demand, e.g. by running short courses. However, even with access to the institution's own information systems, complete information is hard to obtain in some cases. In one case study REPLAN Development Officers had set out to 'map' provision in local colleges:

> *'We have found it an extrememly difficult task, because there are pockets of projects and developments going on that we are not always aware of. It is also very difficult to find out which is the most appropriate decision-making body to feed into in the college. The EGSA would have great difficulty in keeping up-to-date information about college provision because developments are taking place all the time, and I suspect they will not inform the EGSA.'* (REPLAN Development Officer)

When the case study EGSAs sought information that was more detailed than course leaflets, e.g. course profiles, they were seen to be moving beyond the public level of information into an area that was semi-private, and here access to information depended on trust.

4.4.2 Examples of good practice

There were some examples of good practice, where the institutions (or open college networks) had taken the initiative:

- The open college network in case study B had produced a directory which listed and described all courses in statutory providers in the area, and booklets containing information on Return to Learning and Access courses.
- Colleges had produced booklets containing information on courses for adults (e.g. in case study B).
- A college had developed a standard format for course leaflets with detailed information (case study A).
- Marketing posts at senior management level or with access to senior management had been set up in some colleges (case studies A and C), and it was hoped that this would improve the flow of information from the providers to the EGSAs.
- EGSAs had access to information about new developments through representation on faculty advisory committees (case study A) or adult working parties (case study B).
- Two institutions had course information offices, which could potentially provide a centrally coordinated distribution system (case studies A and B).

4.4.3 Information across the institution

It was also seen as important to enable staff across the institution to reach a fuller understanding of the overall pattern of provision:

> *'This college, and there may be others, is not itself clear as to what it has to offer, i.e. staff in one department don't know what the other departments are offering and can't offer guidance or information.'* (Head of Department, FE college)

Suggestions for improving the dissemination of information included a newsletter with information about adult learning opportunities and a (thin)

handbook containing names and extension numbers of key personnel in the institution which could be useful to both EGSAs and institution staff.

4.4.4 Information about curriculum decision making

Providers were also asked how EGSAs might obtain information about the curriculum development processes and key personnel in their institutions. This information would make feedback easier for the EGSAs by enabling them to understand the priorities of the provider, choose the most effective means of communicating with the provider and anticipate the likely response.

Answers to this question again varied according to the links already established between the EGSAs and the providers. The most common response was to suggest key individuals, usually in senior management posts and/or represented on the EGSAs' management committees, or having an advisory/guidance role within the institution. Alternatively EGSAs were seen as obtaining this information from institution working parties/advisory committees on which they were or could be represented.

In one case, where the EGSA was located within the institution's premises and the director of the EGSA was a member of the institution's staff, the mechanisms for providing information both about provision and curriculum development processes were seen by the provider as effective.

In cases where links with the EGSAs were weakest, the question of how EGSAs might obtain information about decision-making processes and key personnel was met with some surprise – it was not clear to the interviewees that such information would be useful.

Perhaps the most significant theme running through the responses to this question was that it was felt that curriculum development processes were not fully understood by staff working within the institutions themselves. Opening up the institutions to feedback from EGSAs is therefore likely to raise questions about the quality of information available to providers' staff, and the opportunities for them to participate in curriculum development processes.

4.4.5 Adequate information

In order to provide adequate information for feedback, the institution will need to take the initiative by:

- Establishing a **centralised system of obtaining information** on all learning opportunities provided by the institution.
- Supplying the EGSA with both detailed information about provision and publicity materials designed for potential learners through a **coordinated dissemination system**.
- Ensuring that the EGSA has **information about its curriculum development processes and key personnel**.

4.5 Obtaining Feedback for Curriculum Development

Although there were different patterns of impact of feedback from EGSAs on the curriculum in the case study areas the interviews with providers' staff revealed a general consensus about what steps could be taken to make feedback effective. This section looks at the mechanisms that were working effectively or that interviewees felt were necessary to make feedback effective.

4.5.1 A strategy combining several mechanisms

Providers emphasised that in order to have an impact on any particular issue, or on the curriculum programme planning as a whole, the EGSA would need to have a strategy which combined several mechanisms. The strategy would involve:

- **informal contact** between institutions and the EGSA;
- the **identification of key individuals** in institutions who could assist in the feedback process;
- the arrangement of **formal inputs** into the institutions' curriculum development processes.

There was a tendency among interviewees to assume that the intitiative for such a strategy would be taken by the EGSA (a similar attitude was observed in relation to curriculum information). However, it was clear that in those cases where effective mechanisms were operating, the institutions had taken responsibility for setting them up and involving the EGSA. For these institutions the concept of being "responsive" was a proactive one.

EXAMPLE 17

A provider involves the EGSA in curriculum development

The principal and one of the area coordinators of an adult education institute requested a meeting with the EGSA to seek information about unmet needs, in order to develop new provision particularly for unemployed/unwaged adults. The EGSA followed up the meeting by making a formal presentation on the priority areas of needs of their enquirers at the institute's staff coordinating group.

New courses that resulted from these discussions included Science for Study, Maths for Study, Cookery Certificate (linked with the local college), Access to Photography.

The institute saw its use of the EGSA as successful due to several factors: the information from the EGSA was specific, tangible and possible for the institute to achieve, which led to a realistic response; the institute already had a good working relationship with the EGSA, including involvement on the service's management committee, and feedback from the EGSA was not seen as threatening; the institute it-

self was prepared to take risks and appreciated that new ventures may take time to succeed; the EGSA was not seen primarily as a recruiting agency and was not blamed when subsequently one particular course did not recruit well. The exercise was also seen as useful in that it illustrated the benefits of working jointly with other providers, in this case the college of further education, in order to meet the needs of adults.

4.5.2 Informal contact

Interviewees agreed that **good informal working relationships** between the EGSA and providers at course tutor and management levels enabled feedback to take place from day to day, and also provided the basis for more formal discussions and feedback on sensitive issues.

> *'A lot of effective working is through confidence, trust, knowing people. If we know we can trust people – we're aiming for the same things generally – we will be much more willing to listen to the negative things.'* (Vice Principal, FE college)

Such relationships could be initiated by providers, but would not in themselves be sufficient to make feedback effective.

Interviewees emphasised that institutions should be seeking opportunities for **collaborative work** with EGSAs, both as a mechanism for feedback and also as a way of strengthening relationships and developing mutual understanding.

Issues that institutions and EGSAs had worked on together in the case study areas included:

- developing strategies for increasing childcare facilities
- involving the EGSAs' in staff development exercises
- EGSAs participation in learning groups to give talks on educational opportunities
- organising meetings for staff from different institutions on issues concerning unemployed/unwaged adults
- joint counselling arrangements between EGSA staff and institutions' outreach staff
- jointly organised public exhibitions and open days for adults.

EXAMPLE 18

Training on grants

At their management committee meeting, EGSA staff reported that a number of enquirers were experiencing problems with grants (grants were not available, enquirers were given wrong advice by colleges etc.). It was clear from the discussion that college staff were not well-informed about the grants system, and it was proposed by a representative of the community education development team that a day school should be organised for college staff on the issue of grants. This was set up jointly between the development team and the EGSA.

This and similar staff training ventures funded through the urban aid programme led to a more coherent structure of staff development with a working party reporting to the urban programme committee of the local authority. The EGSA was involved at all these stages.

4.5.3 Key individuals

Part of the process of effective feedback would be the identification of key individuals within institutions, who had an understanding of the work of the EGSAs.

In one case, where the feedback work of the EGSA was well established, the EGSA was seen as having 'a voice at every level' within the institution from course tutors to governors, which meant that the EGSA could be seen as a potential ally by staff working on issues concerning the learning needs of adults.

While interviewees expected individuals working in particular areas within the institutions to make strong links with the EGSAs, the need for these contacts to be spread across the institution was emphasised, so that feedback did not become marginalised.

4.5.4 Formal inputs

There was widespread agreement among interviewees that EGSAs needed to have access to the formal curriculum development processes of the institutions, with senior management involvement. This would enable them to follow through particular issues and maximise the impact of their feedback, reach beyond the sympathetic few to the wider college, and take part in macro debates about provision for adults, i.e. policy formulation and programme planning. The exact mechanism in each case would depend on the institution's structures and the EGSA's resources.

- one mechanism for feedback was representation on the EGSAs' **management/advisory committee** by a senior member of the institution's staff. This would provide a means of supporting the EGSA as well as obtaining feedback. One interviewee saw the

committee as 'neutral territory' where sensitive issues could be explored.

Several interviewees commented that the EGSAs needed to look at the way their committees functioned so that they could get the best use of the providers' representatives; separating the management and advisory functions where these were combined might allow more time for feedback.

- **Regular meetings set up for the purpose of feedback** provided another mechanism. These might be at different levels for different purposes, with course tutors, outreach workers, at department level, or with senior management. A written report on feedback issues from the EGSA could provide a focus for meetings, which would need to be minuted.
- The use of **school/faculty/department advisory committees** was recommended by some interviewees, but others expressed some reservations – the effectiveness of advisory committees might be limited if they lacked resources, and depended on voluntary attendance. Feedback at this level might also be limited to the particular school, faculty or department, and to cover several such bodies would require considerable staff resources for the EGSAs.
- Several interviewees felt that the disadvantages of advisory committees could be overcome by the use of **cross-institution bodies, such as adult working parties** as mechanisms. For a model of good practice see Chapter 3.3.4.

EXAMPLE 19

Provision for adults in proposed tertiary colleges

The EGSA representative on a college adult working party raised the issue of a possible reduction of provision for adults in the tertiary college proposals then under discussion in the area. The discussion, which was minuted and passed on to the curriculum development subcommittee of the academic board, led to a meeting of representatives from the adult working parties of local colleges, who then mounted a campaign to raise the profile of adults in the tertiary education boards.

The issue raised by the EGSA coincided with concern among staff of the college, but it was useful to have the college position validated by the EGSA's community perspective. This example underlined for the interviewee the effectiveness of joint working across institutions, and the importance of building up trust and credibility over the long-term in order to make this happen.

Participating in formal curriculum development meetings of the institutions allows the EGSA to understand the context in which its feedback will be received. Having a **standing item on the agenda** for feedback from the EGSA will ensure that feedback issues are addressed in these meetings.

One of the effects of the Education Reform Act 1988 will be the delegation of financial control to the **governing bodies** of institutions. This may lead to changes in the relationship between governing bodies and academic boards and a more direct role for governing bodies in curriculum development. The composition of governing bodies will also be oriented more towards employers. It will therefore be important to ensure that formal feedback mechanisms have routes into the new governing bodies.

- A senior staff member could be given **responsibility for coordinating the institution's strategy for obtaining and responding to feedback**, as part of their job description. This was seen by providers as a way of ensuring a coherent response from the institution. It would provide a mechanism for feedback in addition to other formal mechanisms; informal contacts between staff members and the EGSA would still be necessary. The responsibilities of this coordinator are considered in Chapter 4.6.

One college in case study A had appointed a Marketing Coordinator, reporting to the Vice Principal and with easy access to the senior management team. The person was also the college's representative on the EGSA's management committee, and had thus provided the EGSA with an important mechanism for feedback.

In case study C, all the FE colleges were, at the time of the interviews, appointing Marketing Directors at Head of Department level, part of whose job would be to seek and respond to feedback from the community.

4.5.5 Structures linking institutions

Staff in all three areas commented on the importance of **having structures that linked institutions** and provided opportunities for curriculum and staff development. Such structures would be important sources of feedback from EGSAs and other organisations based in local communities.

Models of good practice in the case studies were:

- local authority panels or committees dealing with issues concerning adult learners; particularly important for policy development in case study A;
- an open college network; important as practical support for staff in developing curricula for adult learners, and for strategic issues such as progression and accreditation in case study B;
- a local authority working party on access courses in case study C;
- consortia responsible for planning curricula and seeking funds, e.g. through the urban area programme in case study A.

The effectiveness of these structures for feedback was seen as depending largely on whether the main function of the structure was as a discussion forum, or whether it 'delivered things'.

Tangible developments from such structures might include resources and provision (e.g. linking courses), curriculum planning, policy documents, coordinated information about provision. In the case of consortia concerned with planning training agency funded programmes, the case study EGSAs

had had little direct involvement, and the management structures might cause particular difficulties for feedback (this point is developed further in Chapter 6).

4.5.6 Support for EGSAs

As part of the strategy for making feedback effective, providers will need to find ways of supporting EGSAs not only by engaging in the feedback dialogue, but also by giving practical support, e.g. through the EGSAs management committees and by helping them to secure adequate resources.

In the long term, it is in the providers' interest to expand the practice of educational guidance both within their own institutions and also across the range of organisations and agencies in contact with adults. **Local educational guidance networks** provide a model for developing educational guidance in a systematic way, with effective channels of referral and feedback. Providers will need to find ways of supporting the EGSAs to fulfill a central coordinating role within the networks (see Chapter 5.2.2.).

4.6 Responding to Feedback and Evaluating the Response

The ability of the institution to change its curriculum in response to feedback will depend on many factors, including resources. The internal factors outlined previously – policy, support for work with adult learners, effective review procedures – will be crucial in making the institution receptive to feedback.

One of the difficulties encountered in the case studies was that an institution's response was in some cases impossible for the EGSA to detect or measure. Silence is not an inducement to further feedback. It is therefore important that the institution has the mechanism to register the feedback and **make a response**, even if that is to explain why the needs of adult learners cannot be met in a particular case.

The institution will need to be able to monitor feedback it receives, e.g. by establishing a system of **recording feedback**, both formal and informal, and referring it to the appropriate person or committee for action. The procedures for recording and responding to feedback will depend on the mechanisms used – formal meetings will be minuted, other feedback will need to be recorded and collated across the institution.

The process of monitoring and evaluating the institution's response to feedback from an EGSA should be seen in the wider context of evaluating its response to community needs. It has already been suggested that the institution will require a **senior staff member part of whose responsibility will be to coordinate the institution's response to feedback**, and this is emphasised by the need to have a coherent response across the institution. The person will need to be at senior management level in order to have an input into the curriculum development process, and will also need to have a brief across the institution to monitor feedback.

The coordinator of the strategy would need to institute a **regular review of feedback** together with the EGSA. For this it will be necessary to establish appropriate criteria to determine what a successful response would be. Criteria may include the following questions:

Has the institution:

- initiated a strategy for feedback?
- informed staff across the institution of the work of the EGSA and encouraged them to make use of its services?
- sought opportunities for collaborative work with the EGSA?
- involved the EGSA in staff development programmes?
- asked the EGSA to comment on the the institution's provision of curriculum information to the EGSA?
- made it a requirement of planning/review procedures that appropriate community organisations, including the EGSA, are consulted?
- established a system for recording and referring informal and formal feedback from the EGSA?
- established adequate formal mechanisms for the EGSA to make an input into curriculum development?
- made changes in the curriculum as a result of the feedback?
- informed the EGSA of the effect and usefulness of its feedback?
- involved the EGSA in evaluating the process?

CHAPTER 5

THE ROLE OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN THE FEEDBACK PROCESS

Local authorities were responsible for funding EGSAs in the case study areas. This section looks at how the authorities can develop educational guidance and enable feedback from guidance to have an inpact on curriculum development.

5.1 The Responsibilities of Local Authorities in Providing Post-school Education

The responsibilities of local authorities have been redefined by the Education Reform Act 1988 during the course of this research. The implications of the legislation are described in detail elsewhere [28-30]. It is necessary to note here the main functions that local authorities are expected to carry out under the new arrangements. While direct control of the curriculum in both FE and HE has passed to the institutions, local authorities retain the overall responsibility for securing adequate provision for further education (including education for adults), and for the development of a strategic plan for further education.

Although it is not a requirement of the Act, authorities will be encouraged to develop policy statements outlining the aims upon which the strategic plans will be based [30]. They will need to undertake various activities, which will include:

- defining policy priorities, including target groups for provision;
- consulting with providers, students, employers, other agencies including community organisations, and residents, about the policy and planning requirements;
- negotiating with statutory and non-statutory providers to eliminate gaps in provision and avoid wasteful duplication;
- monitoring and evaluating the provision of further education to ensure its adequacy;

- providing staff development to enable policies to be implemented.

5.2 The Role of Local Authorities in Relation to Educational Guidance for Adults

5.2.1 Policy and planning

The development of policy and planning for further education (which has already become more standardised through the Work-Related Non-Advanced FE planning process) may be expected to include policy and planning for the education of adults, and that in turn should include educational guidance for adults.

The significance of the local authority role in developing educational guidance was made clear in the UDACE report *The Challenge of Change* [1]. The report recommended that local authorities should create local educational guidance networks. Authorities were also seen as responsible for funding and setting up appropriate management structures for local educational guidance units which would coordinate and support the networks.

The central role of local authorities in providing educational guidance for adults has been confirmed through consultancy work with authorities undertaken first by UDACE [31] and more recently by the National Educational Guidance Initiative within UDACE.

The DES and Welsh office has consequently awarded educational support grant funding of £1.5 million to develop educational guidance networks in local authorities.

5.2.2 Local educational guidance networks

Local educational guidance networks would offer a comprehensive service of educational guidance to local adults. A range of organisations would be involved, including education and training providers, careers and other agencies concerned mainly with vocational guidance, library services and voluntary sector organisations.

The networks would be formally constituted, and coordinated by local educational guidance units. EGSAs, which already provide the full range of guidance activities, would seem to be the obvious choice as the organisations to fulfill the coordinating role. They would need sufficient resources to carry out this function.

Educational guidance networks would need to exist independently of structures set up for other purposes, such as open college networks, although both kinds of networks would have similar functions, i.e. providing:

- a range of contacts;
- mutual support among practitioners;

- exchange of information;
- opportunities for collaborative work e.g. progression;
- staff development programmes;
- a forum for discussion, strategic planning and policy development;
- involvement in research projects .

An educational guidance network would facilitate the appropriate referral of adults within the network. The network would also provide a means of developing mutual understanding among the different organisations (e.g. information about provision and knowledge of curriculum development processes) and would enable effective mechanisms to be established for feedback from guidance throughout the network.

Setting up these networks will involve the local authorities in complex negotiations between existing institutions and agencies. The impartiality of guidance activities will need to be secured and appropriate management structures established for the local educational guidance units.

5.3 Local Authorities in the Case Studies

In all three case study areas, the local authorities had taken responsibility for the development of educational guidance and were funding the EGSAs either wholly or jointly with other sources. The stages of development and levels of resources, including premises, of the EGSAs differed in each case (see Appendix III). The high proportion of temporary funding should be noted. Even the better resourced services were unable to develop some important aspects of feedback work because of the level of demand for the other guidance activities. The need for further support and resources for the EGSAs was clearly stated by interviewees in both the EGSAs and providers.

Interviewees in local authorities emphasised that the EGSAs had an important role to play in making educational guidance accessible to adults and that feedback was essential for developing appropriate curricula. This was reflected in policy documents (outlined in Chapter 2.3).

Case study A

In terms of policy, the clearest developments were seen in case study A, where a policy for adult education had been developed and within it a policy and strategy for developing educational guidance in the area. The EGSA had been able to make a significant contribution to the policy-making through its representation on the authority's committees.

The strategy for educational guidance was outlined in a committee paper [6] which recommended, as a long-term aim, the setting up of a guidance network with permanent educational guidance workers in post at several

points within the authority's area. Short-term priorities included the establishment of an adult guidance group to oversee the development of the network, with representatives from providers, local authority officers, the EGSA, and the careers and library services. The group would first produce a directory of contacts responsible for guidance within institutions, and further recommendations concerned standardising course descriptions and information on provision, the monitoring of guidance work and staff training.

Although in some respects the strategy follows the UDACE model, there was as yet no clear indication of the relationships between the different agencies involved, particularly with regard to the concept of a local educational guidance unit. Neither was there a recommendation that the feedback process should be seen as a priority.

During the course of the research, a by-election in case study A led to a change of political control. The new administration has made changes to the committee structures, and has proposed a new relationship between the authority and voluntary sector organisations (including the EGSA). These changes seem likely to significantly weaken the impact of feedback from the EGSA.

Case study B

In case study B, the authority had well-developed policies on adult education and equal opportunities, and the setting up of EGSAs across the authority had been seen in this context.

The authority's aim was to provide a comprehensive system of educational guidance for adults delivered through locally-based EGSAs targeted towards adults who were disadvantaged in educational terms. Feedback was seen as an important function, which would inform both the programme planning of education and training providers, and the overall strategic policy and planning functions of the education authority.

However, the resources which were recognised by the authority as necessary to move from the pilot stage to fully operational services, including the development of feedback activity [11], had not been forthcoming, mainly because of budget restrictions imposed by central government on the authority's budget over a number of years. The case study EGSA had meanwhile obtained short-term inner-city partnership funding, which had enabled it to develop its feedback activity while maintaining an advice and counselling service to individuals and groups.

Effective feedback mechanisms had been developed with local providers, but there was no central mechanism for feedback to the authority, other than through the EGSA's annual report. Although the authority had set up independent guidance services with the intention of making guidance accessible to adults across the authority, the EGSAs lacked clear support or management structures at the authority level which would have enabled feedback mechanisms to be set up.

The Education Reform Act 1988 included provision to abolish the authority and hand over responsibility for education to the borough councils. The borough council in the case study had over a long period developed close links with the EGSA, which was seen by the interviewee as offering a

vital service in an area of high unemployment. A consultative paper on proposals for post-school provision in the borough [32] referred to educational guidance as one of the support services to be offered by the authority. However, it was too early in the consultation process to see the exact shape of the service, and what part feedback would play in it. There were also resource implications arising from the transfer of the authority which were not yet clear.

Case study C

In case study C, the EGSA was in a different situation. Although part of the funding was from the local authority, the EGSA was located in the premises of a polytechnic and managed on a day to day basis by a member of the polytechnic's staff. Of the three EGSAs, case study C had the least resources and aimed to cover the largest area (a shire county).

The authority had established a sub-committee to work on the development of educational guidance for adults. In doing so the work of the EGSA had been evaluated. One of the conclusions of the interviewee (County Adviser for FE), was that, although the EGSA had been successful in helping individuals, it had not been set up to feed back to the authority and so had had no impact on policy-making, and its effect on the curriculum of the colleges had been limited.

The authority had agreed to fund two posts for the development of educational guidance networks with the intention of making guidance more accessible to adults, to 'drive down guidance into the field'. However the development of guidance networks had not begun, as the authority was reviewing the total student support systems. The intention was to integrate educational guidance within a revised system of student support rather than isolating it as a separate service with its own set of specialist guidance workers. The interviewee saw this process as following the outlines of the UDACE proposals; the exact role of the EGSA had yet to be negotiated but it was envisaged that it would remain as a central unit, doing some guidance work with individuals, but mainly as an information and staff development base supporting guidance workers in the networks.

Feedback mechanisms were seen as the key to a successful educational guidance system, and would be developed in the overall strategy. These are considered in more detail below.

5.4 Feedback from EGSAs to Local Authorities

5.4.1 Contribution of EGSAs

Feedback from EGSAs is often seen as directed mainly at providers, and this is the way that the process appears in local authority documents in the case studies.

However, it should be apparent from the summary of local authority functions in (5.1) that feedback from EGSAs could make a significant contribution at authority level – for example to policy for adult learners, to strategic planning of provision across institutions and sectors, and to staff development – and this is confirmed by the case studies.

In case study A we saw that the authority had developed policies on education for adults and, as part of this, on educational guidance. The EGSA had been closely involved in drafting the policy on educational guidance, and had made significant inputs to the overall policy on education for adults, for example into the fees policy, in particular the extension of concessionary fees into vocational areas of provision.

In case study B, the EGSA had made significant contributions to the development of policies by the borough, for example to the borough's response to tertiary proposals, in the consultation process in the transfer of the authority, and to policy on training opportunities for women.

EXAMPLE 20

Urban Aid Programme planning

The authority in case study A had established a system of applications for funding for the provision of education and training for unemployed adults through the Urban Aid Programme. This provided a significant budget for learning opportunities, particularly for provision in the very active voluntary sector. Bids were worked out jointly between colleges and voluntary sector providers through adult education consortia across the authority. Criteria for successful applications included issues such as equal opportunities, student and staff support, and student based evaluations.

A central group was set up – the urban aid pool team – to invite and process applications for funds; this included selecting from applications which were over the budget maximum. The EGSA was invited to join this central group because of its overview of provision available. Along with voluntary sector organisations, the EGSA played an important role in the monitoring and selection process of the programme.

EXAMPLE 21

Feedback on discretionary awards

In case study A, the authority's discretionary awards policy had been extensively revised and the EGSA had noted some problems experienced by their enquirers as a result of the new policy. The EGSA was invited by officers to submit a report on the policy to the authority's FE sub-committee. The discretionary awards policy was modified in line with some of the EGSA's proposals, e.g. rules regarding progression and failure to complete designated courses, and the reinstitution of the appeals procedure which had been withdrawn.

5.4.2 Mechanisms for feedback

As was the case with feedback to providers, for feedback at authority level EGSAs required a combination of formal and informal mechanisms. In the **formal mechanisms** in the examples above the EGSAs were represented on the authority's sub-committees, or groups formally reporting to the committee structures. These included:

- The Local Development Council for Adult Education (case study A), a discussion forum open to statutory and voluntary agencies, reporting to the **Adult Education Select Committee** (the EGSA was elected by the LDC as one of its representatives on the select committee) which in turn reported to the FE Sub-Committee. The key mechanism was the AE Select Committee, which had major responsibility for developing policy on education for adults.
- The Borough's **Education Sub-Committee** (case study B), on which the EGSA was represented. While not having the full powers of an education authority, the sub-committee was responsible for making responses to the authority on matters affecting the borough, e.g. tertiary proposals. In the process of transfer of responsibility for education to the borough, the committee became responsible for the preparation of the borough's education plan.
- In case study C the authority was setting up feedback mechanisms as part of the overall development of educational guidance. A mechanism for feedback from the colleges was to be introduced. **Marketing Director posts**, at Head of Department level, had recently been set up in FE colleges in the authority, and it would be part of their market research responsibility to establish feedback mechanisms within the colleges. At authority level the marketing directors would have a structure to feed back into county policy, on the lines of the existing county panel system. The EGSA and local educational guidance networks would need to have an input into the education authority's structures at this level.

The effectiveness of these formal mechanisms depended on **informal mechanisms** and links with individual local authority officers and members. In both case studies A and B, these relationships had been strengthened by having key individual officers as members of the EGSAs' **management committees**. In the example of feedback on discretionary awards policy, the EGSA had established its credibility through advocacy work with individuals in grants appeals, and was seen by officers as an outside agency with expertise on student needs. Consequently the EGSA was invited to write a report on the grants policy when officers wished to review the policy.

Structures linking institutions and agencies across sectors, including the voluntary sector, were used by EGSAs as mechanisms for feedback to providers. Such mechanisms (e.g. open college networks, local authority working parties/panels, adult education consortia) also have a function in feedback to the authority.

One of the effects of the Education Reform Act 1988 will be to increase the autonomy of education and training providers. Structures linking in-

stitutions will therefore assume an even greater importance, and local authorities will need to consider ways of establishing and maintaining them.

5.5 The Local Authority Role in Making Feedback Effective

5.5.1 Difficulties in the case studies

It was apparent from all three case studies that staff working in EGSAs and in providers required clear lines of communication to and from the local authority, and that these were not always adequate in relation to issues concerning the education of adults. In particular, problems occurred because of the structural separation at local authority level of adult education from vocational further education, or from community education, or again on the basis of an age divide (13+, 16-19, 16+, 19+, etc.), the result of which was that issues concerning adults in some cases became marginalised.

Where effective structures for feedback on issues concerning adults were operating, they were not secure. In case study A, the key mechanism was a select committee, which was a temporary arrangement. In case study B, the uncertainty over the future of the authority and the budget restrictions had hindered the development of feedback mechanisms. The EGSA had however developed mechanisms through the borough council. It was represented on a sub-committee of the borough under the pre-1988 legislations but the arrangements once the borough had assumed the full responsibility of an education authority were not clear.

Indeed, the future of the EGSAs themselves in all three areas was, to varying degrees, unclear, and negotiations were in progress concerning the structural relationship between the EGSAs and the authorities. A number of factors were influencing the reshaping of these relationships, including financial restrictions, changes of political control and redefinition of responsibilities due to government legislation.

5.5.2 Providing a framework

From the case studies it is clear that the local authorities have an essential role to play in providing a framework through which feedback from educational guidance can have an impact on the curriculum for adult learners. In this role an authority will have several **functions**, to:

(i) **develop policy on educational guidance** as part of policy on adult continuing education;

(ii) **fund and support a local educational guidance network**, in partnership with education and training providers and other agencies that are members of the network;

(iii) **fund and support an EGSA**;

- providing sufficient staff resources, with staff at grades appropriate to the level of the work;

- enabling it to play a coordinating role within the education guidance networks;
- ensuring that it has an appropriate management structure, i.e. a structure that supports staff involved in guidance including feedback, and retains the independence of the service so that its guidance is impartial.

This function may also be undertaken in partnership with education and training providers to:

(iv) **fund and support structures** which enable institutions and agencies **across different sectors** to work together and provide mechanisms for feedback, such as open college networks and adult education consortia;

(v) **establish mechanisms for feedback** from educational guidance to the authority itself, through informal channels and formal mechanisms, i.e. committee structures;

(vi) **provide staff development** for guidance workers, including training for the activity of feedback.

CHAPTER 6

FEEDBACK TO OTHER AGENCIES

6.1 The Range of Issues

The issues that arise from educational guidance work with adults cover a wide range (see Chapter Chapter 3.2.6). Although most feedback in the case studies occurred between EGSAs and providers or, to a lesser extent, local authorities, there were examples of issues which required feedback to other agencies. These included:

- professional bodies in areas such as nursing, medicine, law, etc.;
- bodies responsible for validating and examining courses;
- agencies responsible for entry to provision, e.g. clearing schemes;
- agencies responsible for managing and funding provision, e.g. HE funding bodies, industrial training boards, the Training Agency (Department of Employment);
- government agencies including those responsible for regulations on student finance (Department of Education and Science), welfare benefits (Department of Social Security), and immigration status (Home Office).

There are profound implications for adult learners in the current proposals for changes to the student award schemes, and for unemployed and unwaged adults in the changes in social security benefit system and the 'availability for work' criteria.

6.2 Employment Training

One major area of concern which was particularly relevant to this research was the training arangements for unemployed adults under the Employment Training programme administered by the Training Agency (Department of Employment). EGSAs had endeavoured to feed back information to the Training Agency's predecessor (MSC) with little success. The new scheme offered individualised training programmes derived from assessment/guidance by local training agencies, who might therefore be expected to be able to gather important information on the unmet needs of adults

and barriers to access. However, the EGSAs, who were in contact with a number of trainees, had found no effective means of feedback to the Training Agency.

EXAMPLE 22

Feedback to the Manpower Services Commission

The EGSA and other agencies involved in a regional conference organised by REPLAN had identified a problem for unemployed adults entering the MSC New Job Training Scheme (1987-8). Following an initial assessment of their needs, trainees had three weeks in which to choose an appropriate training course. After this period they would lose their place on the scheme and be penalised by the loss of social security benefit. There were at that time very few appropriate courses that adults could join at times other than the start of the academic year.

A regional working party was set up with MSC support and representation, and reporting to the MSC nationally. The EGSA was represented on this working party. The objectives were to increase the provision of short courses for adults and to feed back to the MSC nationally the problems of the regulations affecting trainees.

The working party was successful in enabling the development of short courses run by FE colleges with MSC funding, but it had no effect on the regulations of the MSC and the Department of Social Security.

6.3 Feedback Mechanisms

This report has concentrated on the feedback process between EGSAs, providers and local authorities, where developments are most urgently needed and likely to provide early benefits. However, the EGSAs possess information which could be of wider use. There is a clear need for feedback mechanisms to government agencies and departments, and to other bodies **at local, regional and national levels**. In particular, there is an opportunity to establish feedback mechanisms to the proposed **Training and Enterprise Councils** which are expected to take over the functions of the Training Agency locally [33].

These mechanisms will need to be developed with the aid of UDACE and the National Association of Educational Guidance Services (NAEGS) (See Recommendations to other Bodies). The pattern of links needed to conduct feedback from the EGSA is described in Table 7.

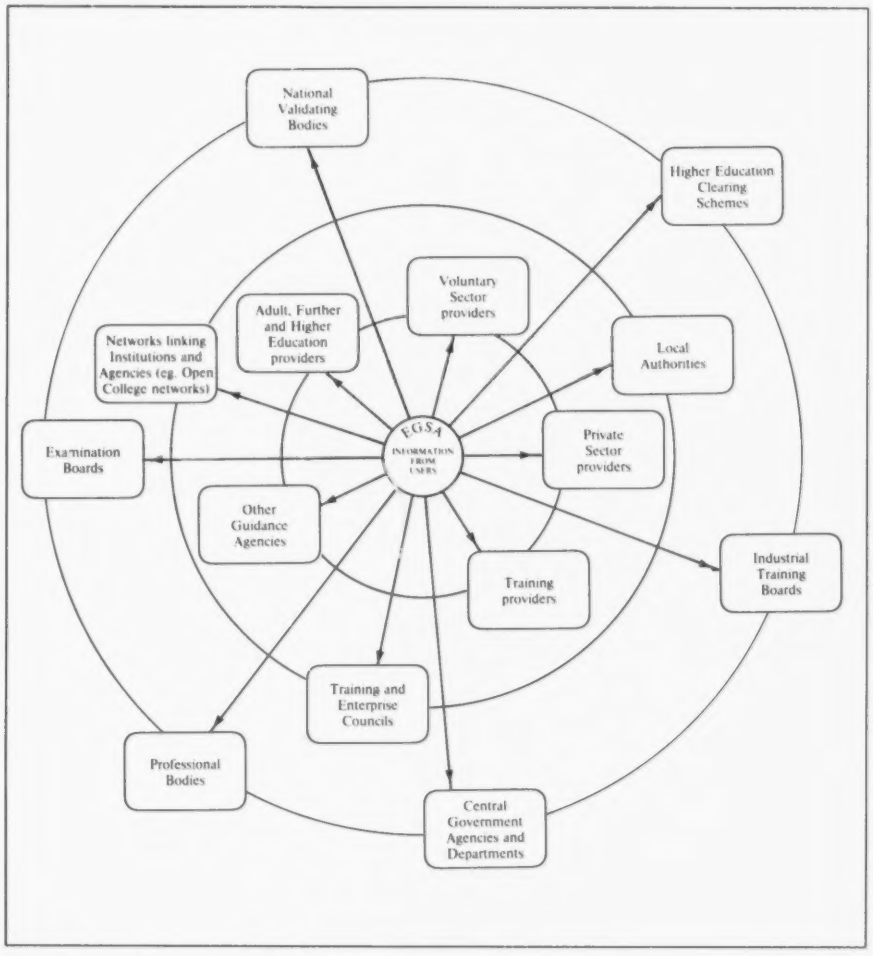


Table 7 – Feedback Links

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS

7.1 What Feedback has to Offer

Educational guidance enables adults to identify their learning needs and seek appropriate learning opportunities. The process involves different activities – informing, advising, counselling, assessing, enabling, advocacy – of which, in helping needs to be identified, counselling is particularly important.

The activity of feedback is complementary to the other guidance activities. Here the guidance service is concerned not with helping individuals or groups to achieve particular outcomes, but with changing the curriculum that is on offer to adults. From its experience of guidance work with individuals and groups, the EGSA is able to evaluate the provision of learning opportunities, and to see where needs are not being met, where the provision is inappropriate, and where adults are faced with barriers to access. It is also able to identify and support curriculum developments that meet the needs of adult learners. In communicating this information to providers and others, the guidance services are seeking to contribute to a curriculum which is more accessible to their clients, more appropriate to their needs, and which aims to empower them by allowing them greater participation in decisions about the learning process.

Educational guidance services for adults have a unique contribution to make to curriculum development. While there are other agencies (e.g. careers services, access/advisory services within providers) offering educational or vocational guidance, only EGSAs are set up to offer the full range of educational guidance activities and to influence the curriculum as a result of their guidance.

Research studies show that education and training opportunities are used by a relatively small proportion of the adult population and that many groups are under-represented, including unemployed and unwaged adults. Similarly, users of existing sources of guidance are likely to be younger, from higher socio-economic groups and more likely to already have education qualifications than those who do not use the services.

The relevance of feedback from EGSAs will therefore be particularly significant where service delivery is targeted on those adults who are least likely to use existing provision.

Feedback covers **a range of information services and skills which EGSAs can offer** to providers, local authorities and other agencies, and should be

distinguished from other services that EGSAs can provide, such as referral of students to providers.

Feedback includes:

- information on patterns of demand and referral of clients;
- information on unmet needs (i.e. gaps in provision), and needs that are inappropriately met (requiring modification of provision);
- information on barriers that deter adults from taking up learning opportunities;
- information on how institutions are perceived by adults in the community;
- information on statutory and non-statutory provision and contacts across the area and nationally;
- expertise in guidance work with adults which can be used in staff development;
- external support for curriculum development for adults, and opportunities for collaborative work;
- contribution to public debates on issues relating to the education of adults.

These services and skills can be used by providers to inform all the stages of the curriculum development cycle – values and needs, design, implementation, evaluation and review, support systems – at different levels of planning from the overall programme down to the particular course/learning opportunity.

7.2 Case Studies: Achievements

EGSAs in the three case study areas had over a period of several years enabled a great number of adults to take up learning opportunities. Feedback was seen as an integral part of guidance, offering the opportunity to shift the curriculum towards adult learners. In two of the areas, the services were recognised by providers as making a significant contribution to curriculum development for adults and by local authorities as having an impact on the development of policy. The range of activities described in this report are an impressive illustration of this feedback work.

Where the EGSAs were able to make an impact on the curriculum, it was due to their adoption of a **proactive strategy**, prioritising the work of feedback. EGSAs developed informal contacts and cultivated allies within providers. For effective feedback it was important also to negotiate formal inputs to curriculum development processes, and to follow up issues with persistence. This meant allocating staff time to feedback when demands for guidance from individuals greatly exceeded the EGSAs' resources.

A number of **providers** in the case studies had taken steps to obtain and respond to feedback. This resulted in useful developments, including new

provision, changes to make the curriculum more flexible, better support for adult students and increased awareness of issues concerning adult learners.

Successful feedback often depended on key individuals at senior management level; the institutions supported the EGSAs and were actively represented on their management/advisory committees. However, it was not effective to rely only on key individuals.

Feedback activity was most sustained in those institutions which had developed policy on education for adults, and had invited the EGSA to take part formally in curriculum development.

Institutions that were responsive to feedback from EGSAs were characterised by an outlook that was open to new ideas; they were prepared to take the initiative in developing a relationship with the EGSAs and in obtaining feedback as part of market research. Where they were also developing systems of monitoring and evaluating their provision, with student input, the institutions were more likely to request feedback as a standard procedure, and to be able to respond positively to feedback on sensitive issues.

Local authorities were the main funders of EGSAs in the case studies. In addition to this role there were examples of policy development on educational guidance, as part of wider policies on education for adults, to which the EGSAs made a significant contribution. One authority had also involved the EGSA in feedback on issues such as fees, discretionary awards, and urban aid programme funding applications.

Although the significance of key individual officers and members should not be ignored, effective feedback resulted particularly from the involvement of EGSAs in formal committee structures and other mechanisms.

The local authorities had also taken responsibility for supporting cross-sector or inter-agency/institution structures, such as open college networks and adult education consortia, linking statutory institutions and (in the AE consortia) voluntary sector agencies. These were widely seen as important mechanisms for feedback to institutions and to authorities.

7.3 Difficulties

The development of feedback on the needs of adult learners depends on the priority given to education for adults within policies and budgets for education and training. There were examples in the case studies where education for adults was marginalised, and feedback was more difficult.

There were many examples of funding arrangements that created disincentives to developing work with adults, both in systems of accounting which favoured full-time students and in limitations in the student grant system. Developing the curriculum for unemployed/unwaged adults was also becoming more difficult due to a combination of factors including budget restrictions, government training arrangements and changes in welfare benefit regulations.

The traditional divide between training and education, vocational and non-vocational provision, has not helped adult learners, and the present focus on the vocational needs of learners, and on the needs of employers, in government policy may not encourage providers to see feedback from community-based organisations such as EGSAs as a priority.

Despite the many achievements, feedback activity in the case studies was limited by a number of factors.

Progress on developing educational guidance across the areas, eg through educational guidance networks as envisaged by UDACE [1] was slow. As a consequence, there was no overall strategy for feedback and mechanisms at authority and provider level had to be separately negotiated.

The impact of feedback was uneven across the providers. In two case studies it was most significant in community education projects, adult education institutes or FE college departments working with adults, and least felt in the HE institutions. In the other case study the EGSA had most impact on the HE institution in which it was located.

EGSAs were poorly resourced to provide a comprehensive service of feedback and in some cases lacked the support and status (e.g. through grading of staff) at authority level which would have helped their credibility with less cooperative providers.

The pioneering atmosphere of EGSAs was echoed within some providers by the feeling of isolation experienced by staff working with adults; feedback was something that happened between like-minded colleagues which left most of the institution unmoved. Improvements to the feedback process often depended on individual initiatives and where these were unsupported by senior management and by a policy framework they were unlikely to thrive.

Many interviewees commented on the difficulties of communicating across their institutions for a variety of reasons, including inter-departmental rivalries. Institutions were in some cases seen as engaged in competition with neighbouring providers. Communication with EGSAs in this context was not easy. Complex curriculum development processes were not widely understood by staff within institutions, which made the task of securing an effective input for an outside agency such as an EGSA more difficult.

It was a time of upheaval for institutions; staff were faced with competing pressures and in some cases severe budget restrictions. This was not a context conducive to listening to feedback, and the EGSAs were sometimes faced with defensive responses.

Perhaps the most significant of the difficulties encountered in feedback was the lack of initiative on the part of providers. In many cases the EGSA was expected to take the initiative at every stage in the feedback process, including even the task of obtaining information about the provision.

The models of good practice in the case studies were achieved in a context that was often unfavourable. During the course of the research it became apparent that a good number of them were extremely vulnerable due to changes in legislation, political control, budgeting and other factors. This represents a considerable waste of potential.

7.4 Opportunities

This period of upheaval has also created opportunities for authorities and providers to re-examine the curriculum to the benefit of adult learners.

While providers are gaining more direct financial control over their programmes, they are at the same time expected to become more accountable. They are developing systems of monitoring and evaluating their provision which could benefit the process of feedback directly (allowing more detailed evaluation of their provision) and indirectly (enabling providers to respond less defensively to feedback).

There is also pressure on providers to seek new markets. A growing awareness of the need for student-centred curricula, the allocation of government funds to work with adults including educational guidance, and above all the knowledge that due to demographic changes, the target student population of the future will need to include a higher proportion of adults, are factors shifting the curriculum towards adult learners. In such a context the potential of feedback from educational guidance may be recognised.

Effective feedback does not start to happen overnight. Relationships take time to be established, the formulation of policy requires consultation, and formal mechanisms have to be negotiated between agencies. It is therefore important for local authorities, providers, EGSAs and other agencies to be working now on policies and strategies to develop feedback in order to take advantage of opportunities which may arise.

7.5 What Needs to be Done

Despite differences in the case studies due to local factors, there was a considerable degree of consensus among EGSAs and providers about the main steps to be taken to make feedback effective.

The main points, which are developed in the recommendations and guidelines, are the need for:

- Policy on educational guidance, at all levels, which recognises the significance of feedback.
- Local authority support and resources, including a framework of structures that enable feedback to take place across authorities, e.g. formalised local educational guidance networks with EGSAs playing a central coordinating role.
- Proactive strategies to be adopted by EGSAs for feedback activity, and by providers for obtaining and responding to feedback. This would involve both EGSAs and providers in developing the existing feedback activity in a systematic way. Providers would need to take initiatives in developing feedback, rather than merely responding, and their strategy would need to be coordinated at a senior level.

- Recognition of the importance of formal mechanisms for feedback, with inputs into the key decision-making processes.

Making feedback effective requires resources and the cooperation of different agencies. The recommendations and guidelines in this report are intended as a practical set of suggestions for developing the work. It is probable that EGSAs, even on current levels of resources, are already engaged in feedback activity of some form. By distinguishing feedback from other activities and making it more effective, the EGSAs will not only add value to their other guidance activities but also contribute arguments for better resources in order to develop the educational guidance system.

The research focussed on feedback between EGSAs and providers. However, it showed that EGSAs were presented with issues which required feedback to local authorities, government agencies and other bodies. The local authorities also have a crucial role to play in providing policy, support and structures that will sustain feedback. The recommendations are therefore not confined to EGSAs and providers.

CHAPTER 8

RECOMMENDATIONS AND GUIDELINES

8.1 Recommendations and Guidelines for Educational Guidance Services: Making Feedback Effective

1 The EGSA will gain the most impact from its feedback if it pursues a **proactive strategy for service delivery**. For this the EGSA will need to:

   i have clearly defined aims and priorities; target groups will need to be identified, and feedback should be a priority in the strategy;

   ii ensure that the service is accessible to adults, particularly those in target groups;

   iii develop links and collaborative work with community organisations, educational outreach workers, and provision for adults returning to study;

   iv ensure that the service is seen by unemployed and unwaged adults as relevant to their needs;

   v maintain the independence of the service, so that its guidance to individuals and groups is impartial and its feedback is independent;

   vi give sufficient emphasis to counselling as the key activity in enabling adults to identify and articulate their learning needs;

   vii encourage users to evaluate the service;

   viii make sufficient time for feedback;

   ix develop approaches to providers that are helpful rather than critical, and ensure that providers are aware of the services that EGSAs can offer.

2 EGSAs will need to maintain **information systems** covering information:

   - about the curriculum;
   - that is work-related (e.g. skills shortages, careers information);

- obtained from users (for guidance work, managing the service and feedback).

In order to provide evidence for feedback the EGSA will require an information system which:

i is simple to use;

ii is capable of producing quantifiable information for feedback on:
   — the characteristics of users;
   — patterns of demand;
   — patterns of referral;
   — unmet / inappropriately met needs and barriers to access;

iii is capable of correlating different categories of information;

iv provides the EGSA with information which is sufficiently precise and detailed to be of use to providers;

v is able to store qualitative information for feedback (i.e. users' experiences of institutions and curricula);

vi provides a means of relating the quantifiable to the qualitative information if this is stored separately;

vii protects the confidentiality of users.

viii These requirements would best be met by the use of a **computerised system** for storing information.

ix Quantifiable information, which will be used as evidence in feedback in the form of statistics, will need to be recorded on enquiry forms etc. using a **code system**.

x In addition to information obtained from users through interviews, the EGSA will need to **follow-up enquirers** on a regular basis in order to obtain information on the outcomes of its guidance.

xi The EGSA will need to **review the information** it is collecting regularly in order to identify the issues it wishes to feedback, either as single issues or as part of a regular report to institutions.

3 As part of its strategy for feedback, the EGSA will require a **range of mechanisms** to enable its feedback to have the maximum impact on institutions. It will need to:

i build relationships with staff in institutions through informal contacts;

ii identify key individuals within institutions who will support the activity of feedback;

iii negotiate formal mechanisms so that feedback can effectively reach the key decision-making processes of the institution.

4 When **feeding back information on a particular issue** the EGSA will need to:

i check how the issue fits in with the overall aims of the feedback strategy;

ii be clear about its objectives;

iii select appropriate mechanisms (often a combination of formal and informal mechanisms is necessary);

iv anticipate the provider's response;

v be aware of the provider's curriculum development timetable;

vi consider the best way to communicate the issue:

- written evidence may be required, e.g. statistics or case studies;
- reports on particular issues or for particular institutions may be more useful than information contained in annual reports whose main purpose is monitoring the EGSA's service;
- regular reports eg containing information on patterns of demand and referral would be useful to providers;

vii differentiate feedback from other activities involving contact with providers so that the institution takes note of the feedback;

viii make the feedback specific so that the provider can take positive action;

ix consider involving users directly in the feedback activity; EGSAs should be aware that this may carry risks for the users.

5 **Monitoring and evaluating feedback** should be part of a wider process of monitoring and evaluating the delivery of the service and needs to be incorporated into the activities of the service from the outset. The EGSA will need to:

i distinguish feedback from other guidance activities and keep a record of it;

ii measure outcomes against the aims of the strategy; successful outcomes would include:

- curriculum change;
- raising awareness of the issues;
- making further feedback possible.

iii In examining the feedback activity, the service will need to make a **checklist of questions**, which may include:

At the level of strategy:

- Were aims and priorities set, which reflected the EGSA's policy, its clients' needs, and the balance of issues requiring feedback (short- and long-term)?
- Was sufficient time made available?
- Had the groundwork been done (i.e. building relationships with providers, letting them know what the service can offer, setting up mechanisms)?

For the particular example of feedback:

- Were the aims clear and realistic (i.e. could the EGSA reasonably expect to achieve them)?
- Was the approach made in a way that could be seen as positive?
- Were the provider's responses anticipated?
- Were the mechanisms used appropriate?
- Was the issue communicated in the most effective way?
- Was the quality of information on unmet needs/barriers to access adequate?
- Was the issue followed through?
- Were staff given adequate support?
- Are there training needs arising from the feedback?
- Was the feedback activity adequately recorded?
- What were the main reasons for success or lack of success of the feedback?
- What conclusions can be drawn?

iv Outcomes of evaluation. Evaluation of the feedback process will enable the EGSA to:

- revise its strategy, set fresh priorities, identify staff training needs and engage in further feedback activity;
- argue for increased resources where necessary;
- accept feedback on the EGSA's own service from providers, other agencies and users, by becoming more aware of the process.

6 Feedback activity will emphasise the need for **adequate resources and appropriate management structures** for EGSAs. The EGSA will need to:

i secure adequate resources for its work, including sufficient staff at appropriate grades for the level of the work;

ii recognise the demands of feedback activity on staff, and secure access to staff development and training;

iii provide support for staff engaged in feedback activity through appropriate management structures;

iv obtain support from providers and other organisations in order to secure resources.

7 The process of guidance, including feedback, would be made more effective by the establishing of **local educational guidance networks** on the UDACE model where such networks have not yet been established. EGSAs will need to:

i promote the concept of formalised educational guidance networks with providers and local authorities;

ii seek to play a central coordinating role as the local educational guidance unit in the networks;

iii ensure that the functions of the networks include feedback.

8.2 Recommendations and Guidelines for Providers: Obtaining and Responding to Feedback

1 Feedback is a two-way process of communication, which requires providers and EGSAs to work closely together. The process needs to be initiated by the provider as well as by the EGSA, and to be systematically incorporated into the curriculum development processes of the institution. The provider will need to **develop a proactive strategy for involving the EGSA and responding to its feedback.**

2 In order to develop the strategy and provide a coherent response to feedback the institution will require a **senior staff member, part of whose responsibility will be to coordinate the strategy for obtaining and responding to feedback.**

3 Feedback from the EGSA will be most effective where **the institution is already receptive to such information**, rather than defensive in its outlook. The institution will need to:

- i develop policy on adult continuing education, which will include policy on educational guidance, and should make explicit the aims of the institution in seeking feedback from the EGSA;
- ii support work with adult learners at all levels and across different curriculum areas of the institution, e.g. through:
  - — a cross-institution working party feeding into the curriculum development structures;
  - — a programme of staff development for teaching and admin. staff on the needs of adult learners;
  - — recognising the key role of educational guidance in adult learning and developing guidance across the institution;
  - — improving the flow of information across the institution, e.g. through a newsletter, directory of staff in the institution;
- iii develop systems of monitoring and evaluating provision, which should include:
  - — evaluation of provision by learners;
  - — systems of obtaining information about learners;
  - — procedures for encouraging or requiring staff involved in curriculum development and review to consult the EGSA.

4 The provider will need to be aware that for its feedback to be effective **the EGSA will require information about provision and curriculum development processes** in the institution. The provider will need to take the initiative by:

- i establishing a centralised system of obtaining information on all learning opportunities provided by the institution (available both to the EGSA and to the provider's staff);

ii supplying the EGSA with detailed information on provision and publicity materials designed for potential learners through a coordinated dissemination system;

iii ensuring that the EGSA has information about its curriculum development processes and key personnel.

5 The provider's strategy for obtaining feedback may be part of a wider **market research strategy**. The provider will need to:

i make a formal approach to the EGSA, at a senior level, to find out what services and skills the EGSA can offer and what information and support it requires;

ii ensure that staff are informed of the EGSA's service and encourage informal working relationships between staff and the EGSA;

iii seek opportunities to work jointly with the EGSA;

iv identify key individuals within the institution who will be expected to form a network of contacts across the institution, providing a mechanism for feedback from the EGSA;

v identify the formal and informal decision making processes in the institution, and ensure that the EGSA has inputs for feedback into these processes, including formal mechanisms, e.g. through:

- regular meetings with senior staff;
- school/faculty/department advisory committees;
- cross-institution bodies, e.g. adult working parties;
- sub-committees of academic board;
- routes to the new governing bodies;

vi ensure that feedback is given space in meetings by having standing items on agendas;

vii participate in structures linking institutions and agencies across the different sectors of education and training, e.g. open college networks, adult continuing education consortia, local authority working parties, and use these structures also as mechanisms for feedback on the curriculum.

6 The coordinator of the strategy will need to set up **procedures for responding to feedback** from the EGSA across the institution. Staff will need to:

i record formal and informal feedback; formal meetings will be minuted, other feedback will need to be recorded and collated;

ii refer the feedback to the appropriate point for action to be taken;

iii respond to the EGSA, to explain the action taken, or why action is not possible.

7 The coordinator will need to institute a **regular review of feedback** together with the EGSA, establishing criteria to determine what a successful response would be. Criteria may include the following questions:

Has the institution:

i initiated a strategy for feedback?

ii informed staff across the institution of the work of the EGSA and encouraged them to make use of its services?

iii sought opportunities for collaborative work with the EGSA?

iv involved the EGSA in staff development programmes?

v asked the EGSA to comment on the the institution's provision of curriculum information to the EGSA?

vi made it a requirement of planning/review procedures that appropriate community organisations including the EGSA are consulted?

vii established a system for recording and referring informal and formal feedback from the EGSA?

viii established adequate formal mechanisms for the EGSA to make an input into curriculum development?

ix made changes in the curriculum as a result of the feedback?

x informed the EGSA of the effect and usefulness of its feedback?

xi involved the EGSA in evaluating the process?

8 To **encourage the process of feedback within educational guidance**, providers will need to:

i support the development of local educational guidance networks and take an active role in them;

ii support the EGSA, e.g. by:

- participating in the EGSA's management committee;
- supporting the EGSA to play a central coordinating role in the local educational guidance network;
- helping the EGSA to secure adequate resources i.e. from the local authority and also (in view of financial delegation to institutions in the Education Reform Act 1988) from providers.

8.3 Recommendations for Local Authorities: Providing the Framework for Feedback

1 Local authorities have an essential role to play in providing a framework through which feedback from educational guidance can have an impact on the curriculum for adult learners. In this role the authority will have several functions:

i to develop policy on educational guidance as part of policy on adult continuing education; feedback should be a central part of such a policy;

ii to fund and support a local educational guidance network capable of providing mechanisms for feedback across the area, in partnership with education and training providers and other agencies that are members of the network;

iii to fund and support an EGSA by:

- providing sufficient staff resources, with staff at grades appropriate to the level of the work;
- enabling it to play a coordinating role within the local educational guidance networks;
- ensuring that it has an appropriate management structure, i.e. a structure that supports staff involved in guidance including feedback, and retains the independence of the service so that its guidance is impartial.

This function may be undertaken in partnership with education and training providers to:

iv fund and support structures which enable institutions and agencies across different sectors to work together and provide mechanisms for feedback, such as open college networks and adult continuing education consortia;

v establish mechanisms for feedback from educational guidance to the authority itself, through informal channels and formal mechanisms, i.e. committee structures;

vi provide staff development for guidance workers, including training for the activity of feedback.

8.4 Recommendations to Other Bodies: The Educational Guidance Initiative (UDACE)

1 In order to make the process of feedback from educational guidance more effective, the Initiative will need to:

i encourage the development of appropriate computer software for EGSAs to use in storing information collected from users for the purposes of feedback and monitoring the service;

ii consult with the National Association of Educational Guidance Services and other relevant bodies to investigate mechanisms for feedback from EGSAs at regional and national level to organisations which have a responsibility for curriculum development. These will include central government departments and agencies, professional bodies, clearing schemes, funding and validating bodies, etc.;

iii in its consultancy work with local authorities, encourage the development of feedback activity as a major element in educational guidance, through the:
   - establishment of mechanisms for feedback in local educational guidance networks;
   - provision of adequate resources, including staff at appropriate grades, staff development programmes and appropriate management structures for the networks (including EGSAs);

iv encourage the development of staff training programmes at local and regional levels for educational guidance workers and members of educational guidance networks, aimed at providing the skills and knowledge required for feedback activity.

The Educational Guidance Initiative (UDACE) and the FEU

v The Initiative and the FEU will need to promote further research into the development of local educational guidance networks, drawing on existing models of good practice, and investigating mechanisms for feedback within the networks.

The FEU and the Training Agency (Department of Employment)

The FEU in its curriculum development role can help the Training Agency to ensure that feedback from adult learners makes an impact on the curriculum development processes of central government training programmes (e.g. those funded through the Training Agency). In particular it should:

vi investigate the effectiveness of the Training Agency's response at local, regional and national level to feedback arising from educational guidance work with adults;

vii investigate and advise on the establishment of appropriate informal and formal mechanisms for feedback within the Training Agency's existing structures, and in the new structures arising from the creation of Training and Enterprise Councils.

84 99

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GLOSSARY

AE	Adult Education
AEI	Adult Education Institute
ALFA	Access to Learning for Adults (North London Open College Network)
CNAA	Council for National Academic Awards
EGSA	Educational Guidance Service for Adults
FE	Further Education
FEU	Further Education Unit
HE	Higher Education
INSTITUTION	Institution providing education and training (e.g. college, institute, polytechnic, university)
NAFE	Non-Advanced Further Education
NIACE	National Institute of Adult Continuing Education
PROVIDER	Institution providing education and training (e.g. college, institute, polytechnic, university)
REPLAN	Programme funded by the Department of Education and Science to promote the development of education opportunities for the adult unemployed
SIACE	Scottish Institute of Adult Continuing Education
UDACE	Unit for the Development of Adult Continuing Education
WRNAFE	Work Related Non-Advanced Further Education

APPENDIX 1

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The aims and funding of the project were described in section 1 of this report. The research was carried out in **three case study areas** – Bradford Metropolitan District (case study A), the London Borough of Hackney (case study B) and the County of Hertfordshire (case study C). The three areas had well-established educational guidance services for adults, with contrasting management structures, resources, premises and methods of service delivery. The areas also provided a contrast in terms of local socio-economic factors and rates of unemployment.

The fieldwork for the research was carried out in two stages and the findings of each stage were detailed in interim reports presented to the steering group of the project which met three times between April and October 1988.

The **first stage** of the project looked at the process of feedback from the perspective of the educational guidance services in the case study areas. The aims of the first stage were to:

- find out how the EGSAs perceived feedback in relation to other guidance activities, and what their priorities were;
- examine the activity of feedback, looking at examples of good practice and areas of difficulties, in order to identify factors which made feedback effective.

The researcher conducted in-depth taped interviews with members of staff in the EGSAs, following a pilot interview with the EGSA in the London Borough of Lambeth. The questionnaire which formed the basis of these interviews was sent to the services in advance and contained seven sections with questions on:

1 background information about the EGSA – factors affecting feedback activity;

2 aims of feedback, priority given to feedback activity by the EGSA and recognition of the feedback role of the EGSA on the part of providers and local authorities;

3 obtaining information about users and their needs;

4 feedback issues (i.e. unmet/inappropriately met needs) arising from the guidance work;

5 mechanisms for feedback;

6 examples of feedback;

7 evaluating the activity of feedback.

The interim report for stage 1 was completed in June 1988.

Stage 2 of the project focused primarily on the statutory education and training providers in the case study areas. The objectives of this stage were to:

- examine existing mechanisms for requesting and responding to feedback from educational guidance services, both formal and informal, and to evaluate their effectiveness;
- consider ways in which mechanisms for requesting and responding to feedback might be developed.

To meet these objectives and to clarify the issues for the EGSAs, the researcher aimed to develop an understanding of the processes of policy-making, resource allocation and curriculum development in the providing institutions, and to find out what strategies the guidance services would need to use to acquire this information.

While focussing on the feedback process between educational guidance services and providers, the research findings were seen in a wider context, i.e. in relation to funding, policy-making and other bodies influencing curriculum development, such as the local education authorities and government agencies.

As in stage 1, the interviews in the second stage of the project were structured by a detailed questionnaire and were taped. The design of the questionnaire, reflecting the aims above, was based on work from the first stage of the project. It had five sections dealing with:

1 the provider's perspective on the feedback process;

2 providing information about the curriculum;

3 mechanisms and structures for responding to feedback;

4 feedback issues and examples of feedback;

5 evaluating and developing the feedback process.

The providing institutions were selected on the following criteria:

- institutions across different sectors (A/F/HE);
- location of the institutions in areas with high levels of unemployment;
- institutions having established links with or receiving the most referrals from the EGSA.

A formal approach was then made to the principals/ directors of the selected institutions, who were asked to identify staff who would be appropriate to interview, e.g. staff working with unemployed/unwaged adults (or in HE working with mature students); staff in posts with differing levels of responsibility (including advisory responsibilities, course tutors and senior

management). In addition the educational guidance services identified staff with whom they had developed links for feedback. In several cases the two approaches led to the same person, and the majority of interviewees had close links with the educational guidance services. In addition to the interviews conducted with providers' staff, it was possible to interview an officer working in each local authority in a key role in relation to the educational guidance service.

The interviews took place in June and July. Senior management in many cases referred the request for interviews down the line to staff who were seen as more directly involved with the educational guidance services, with the result that only one interviewee was at vice-principal level. It was on the whole more difficult to arrange interviews in HE than in other sectors, which was probably a reflection of the fact that educational guidance for adults was seen by them as more relevant to the AE/FE providers. A second interim report was completed in October 1988.

During the period between November 1988 and March 1989 the findings of the two stages were reshaped into the final report. This involved further checking of information with the case study EGSAs and bringing together the separate perspectives on feedback of the EGSAs on the one hand and the providers and local authorities on the other. While a significant amount of illustrative material from the case studies were retained in the final report, the focus at this stage was less on the detail of the feedback activity in the case studies than on the lessons which that activity had for colleagues developing feedback in EGSAs, providers and local authorities elsewhere. The steering group had three further meetings during this stage, including a full day editing meeting, and was able to contribute to the shaping of the final report. The report, with recommendations and guidelines for making feedback effective, was completed in March 1989.

APPENDIX II

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT AND EDUCATION PROVISION IN THE CASE STUDY AREAS

	Number unemployed	Percentage
Bradford	13,895	10.3
Hackney	14,644	12.9
Herts	13,488	3.1
UK	2,108,600	7.3

(Department of Employment figures; the Unemployment Unit index [34], which measures the unemployment count on the pre-1982 basis, gives a total UK figure of 2,813,100 and rate of 10.1%)

Figure 1: Unemployment in the case study areas (Nov 1988)

Bradford (case Study A) [sources 7, 35, 36]

Population

Bradford Metropolitan District, the catchment area for Bradford Education Advice Service for Adults, has a total population of 472,000 (1988 estimate). While the District as a whole has maintained its population size compared to other cities, there has been a movement of population from the inner city of Bradford to outlying areas.

The proportion of people of black and ethnic minority groups is estimated to be 15.5% of the total population in 1988. Of these, the majority are of Pakistan and Bangladeshi family origin.

In Bradford, the working age population is expected to remain stable as a proportion of the population as a whole during the next eight years.

Economy, employment and unemployment

In the period between 1960 and the early 1980s Bradford experienced an accelerating decline in the manufacturing industries, particularly textiles and engineering, on which its economy largely depended. Whereas in Britain as a whole, manufacturing decline was offset by service growth, the relatively small service sector in Bradford was unable to compensate.

The rate of unemployment reached a peak of 15.8% in 1985 and has since decreased to 10.3% (Figure 1). In their Non-Advanced Further Education (NAFE) Development Plan 1988/91, Bradford MDC note that the unemployment figures show a significant fall in the numbers of unemployed people particularly those in the 16-19 age group, those under the age of 35, and those who have been unemployed for less than six months. The proportion of longer-term and older unemployed is increasing, and men are finding it more difficult to gain employment than women. The rate of loss of full-time jobs in manufacturing industries has slowed down, and the number of jobs in service industries, often part-time and usually held by women, has increased.

Published reports indicate that the economy is becoming more buoyant, with manufacturing industry generally stabilising and growth in textiles, clothing, civil and electrical engineering, and with growth in services industries, particularly mail order distribution, financial services and social/caring industries. However, the NAFE plan also notes that the apparent growth is as yet not supported by firm data, and that manufacturing industries' planning horizon is substantially less than three years, orders for production may cover weeks or even days, and that 'investment in training and capital equipment is an act of faith'.

Political control of Bradford Metropolitan District Council

After a period of Labour control, the elections in 1988 left the council with no party in overall control until a by-election in September when the Conservatives gained control.

Adult, further and higher education in Bradford

At the time of the research further education was provided through the Further Education Sub-Committee of Bradford MDC, which funded three colleges, Bradford and Ilkley (the largest college of FE in the country), Keighley and Shipley. The colleges were responsible for providing adult education in their respective areas. Higher education was provided by Bradford and Ilkley Community College and Bradford University.

In addition to these there was substantial provision relevant to the needs of unemployed/unwaged adults run by organisations in the voluntary sector. Much of this was funded either through the Employment Initiatives Division of the Council or through the Urban Aid Programme which was organised by the Education Department; five consortia representing colleges and voluntary sector organisations had been set up in the District to coor-

dinate applications for funds to the Council, on a model first developed in Shipley and Baildon.

Leeds University Extra-mural Department had a centre in Bradford, and a Pioneer Team whose task was to develop work with adults, including unemployed/unwaged. Provision for unemployed adults funded by the department of employment was undergoing major restructuring into the Employment Training Programme. The shape of this provision in Bradford, as in the other case studies, was not clear at the time of the research.

Bradford had an open consultative forum, the Local Development Council for Adult Education (LDC), reporting to the Adult Education Select Committee, which in turn reported to the Further and Higher Education Subcommittee. Voluntary organisations and statutory agencies, including colleges, were represented on the LDC; the EGSA was one of the organisations elected by the LDC to be represented on the AE Select Committee. However, following the change in political control in September 1988 these structures were being reshaped and it was not clear how far the EGSA would be involved.

Interviews for the research were conducted with staff from the three FE colleges, the university, the Pioneer Team and the local authority.

Hackney (Case Study B) [sources 10, 37-41]

Population

The total population of the inner London Borough of Hackney is 187,000 (1986 estimate). The population has declined rapidly between 1971 and 1981 from 220,000 to 179,600. The proportions of people over the age of 65 and under 29 have been increasing so that there is now a growing dependant population and a decreasing number of people of working age.

Black and ethnic minority groups form over 40% of Hackney's residents. Those of Caribbean origin (17%) are the largest group but there are many others, including significant numbers from the Indian subcontinent and Turkish, Greek and Jewish communities. Hackney is multi-lingual – about 1/3 of Hackney schoolchildren speak a language other than, or in addition to, English at home and 16 different languages are each spoken by more than 100 children.

Economy, employment and unemployment

Over 60% of all households in the borough are entitled to means- tested benefits because incomes are low. Hackney has the highest proportion of single-parent families in England; nearly one in three pupils in Hackney schools lives with a lone parent. There is a very serious housing shortage in the Borough, and a significant proportion of homes in need of renovation. One in ten households suffer from overcrowding, the second highest proportion in England.

Of those in employment in Hackney in 1981, 55.4% were manual workers and 33% of these were semi-skilled or unskilled workers. Comparison with Greater London shows that a significantly lower proportion of Hackney residents are in professional and non- manual occupational groups.

There is an estimated total of 75,000 jobs in the Borough. Of these, some 22,000 are in manufacturing, mainly in clothing, footwear, printing and furniture. Over 20,000 are in public services – Hackney Council, ILEA, the Health Authority, central government and London Regional Transport. The total number of jobs in Hackney declined by nearly 25% between 1973 and 1986, despite a small increase in 1985-6. Jobs in manufacturing industries have fallen by 52% since 1973, and virtually all large firms have closed. Out of an estimated 1,800 manufacturing firms in the Borough, less than 20 employ over 100 people, while two- thirds employ less than 10.

Official unemployment in Hackney in November 1988 stood at 14,644 (see figure 1). Long term unemployment is still a very serious problem in Hackney, although it has fallen by a small amount since reaching a peak in 1986. Unemployment rates for black and ethnic minority groups in London are over twice the national average and rising twice as fast; evidence from surveys conducted by the MSC [42] and by the ILEA Careers Service [43] confirms the discrimination in the job market facing black people in the search for work. Hackney has the highest level of female unemployment in London. In addition to those unemployed or unregistered, it should be noted that many women have poorly- paid part-time and casual jobs. People with disabilities are not identifiable from official statistics but will be at a severe disadvantage with the generally high numbers of unemployed in the area.

In 1981 50% of jobs in inner London were held by inner London residents, compared to 57% in 1971; Hackney residents, like other inner Londoners, have been losing out in the competition for jobs. The ILEA NAFE Plan 1988-1991 [10], indicates that, as lower paid and unskilled jobs tend to be filled by inner Londoners already (because travel costs inhibit outer Londoners), any increase in the share of jobs held by inner Londoners will be in higher paid/higher skill jobs where external competition is fiercest.

The basic skills mismatch is between the number of unemployed and unregistered job-seekers and the relatively small number of vacancies; there is therefore an overall deficit of jobs. Within that overall deficit, certain areas of skills shortages have been identified. There is a growing need for competence in multiple skills which cross traditional craft boundaries with an increasing need for front-line supervisory, financial, administrative and management skills particularly in:

- small businesses, self-employment and sub-contracting;
- business studies including accountancy and higher secretarial skills;
- computing and information technology applications, particularly managing the organisational and human consequences of introducing micro-electronic systems;
- engineering, particularly electrical engineering, micro-electronics and micro-technology;

- science and technology at the technician and graduate level;
- creative and recreational occupations, including technologies such as printing related to art and design, and leisure and recreational management;
- the construction occupations;
- the area of hotel, catering and tourism.

The ILEA NAFE Plan notes that these skill shortages are for people at technician level and above and for their counterparts in service occupations. The changing structure of employment, of sub-contracting and part-time work, requires additional skills of people and a flexible education and training service.

Political control of the local education authority

The ILEA became an elected authority in 1986 with a Labour majority. Previously the ILEA had been controlled by members of the GLC, which also had a labour majority, together with representatives from the inner London boroughs.

Hackney Borough Council has had a Labour majority since 1945, except for 1968-71 when the Conservative Party gained control.

Adult, further and higher education in Hackney

At the time of this research education provision in the Borough was the responsibility of the Inner London Education Authority, although this reponsibility was to be taken over by Hackney Borough as a result of the abolition of the ILEA in the Education Reform Act 1988. Hackney Borough was preparing for the takeover by establishing educational structures and consulting with agencies and the public before submitting draft proposals to the Minister in February 1989; the Borough will assume responsibility in April 1990 [32].

In the ILEA structures, adult and further education were administered through separate branches, and this separation was reflected in the providing institutions. Hackney Adult Education Institute offered part-time provision to adults from twenty sites in the borough. Further education was provided by Hackney College and City and East London College. Interviews were conducted with staff in all three institutions.

Two of Inner London's five Polytechnics were located in or near the Borough; City Polytechnic and the Polytechnic of North London. Of these, the Polytechnic of North London was selected as the most appropriate institution in which to conduct interviews as it received a higher proportion of referrals from the EGSA.

Adults in Hackney seeking education and training also attended courses in other adult, further and higher education institutions in the inner London area. The North London Open College Network(ALFA) provided a network linking these institutions, and offered support for staff working on areas of concern to adults, such as courses for adults, progression, and ac-

creditation. A similar organisation (SCOPE) in East London was in the process of merging with ALFA.

In addition to the statutory sector provision, there was also provision in the voluntary sector; some of this was funded through the Borough Council, and some was provided jointly with the adult education institute.

Hertfordshire (Case Study C) [sources 8,9,44,45]

Population

The population of Hertfordshire stood at 961,000 in 1986 (County Household Survey), and had grown by over 7% since 1971.

Economy, employment and unemployment

Like other parts of Britain, Hertfordshire experienced a period of economic recession with consequent job losses particularly in manufacturing during the 1970s and early 1980s. Since 1984, the economy has begun to recover from the recession and unemployment has fallen to 3.1% (Figure 1). Of the total number unemployed, more than 30% have been unemployed for more than one year.

In spite of losses through the recession, the manufacturing sector still accounted for over a quarter of employees in 1984 (compared to 22% average in GB). Since 1984, the manufacturing sector has restructured with an increasing emphasis on high technology uses such as electronics and computing. General trends are for employment to continue to fall in the manufacturing sector, but demand for higher skilled staff, scientists, technologists and engineers has grown strongly. Hertfordshire has the highest concentration of employment in high technology industries of any area in the UK, according to research done by Cambridge University. This is a reflection of the strength of the aerospace industry in the county. However, the restructuring of manufacturing has led to a dependence on a few largely Defence-related industries, and the economy is therefore vulnerable to pressures in these industries.

The service sector came through the recession virtually unscathed, and has continued to grow strongly since, particularly in the areas of banking and finance. Other sectors showing growth were distribution, hotels, catering, repairs, transport and other services.

Male employment declined during the period of recession, because of the loss of male full-time jobs in manufacturing, although there was a growth of male full-time employment in the service sector. Female employment in the service sector increased during this period with full-time employment growing slightly more strongly than part-time employment, although female part-time workers still comprise 30% of all service employees.

The relatively low rate of unemployment in Hertfordshire has implications for education and training provision for adults. Several interviewees stated that the training needs of unemployed adults were unlikely to have a major impact on curriculum development because of the low numbers involved, which was accentuated by the different needs of those seeking training and the relatively high proportion of people who would have great difficulty in finding work, e.g. because of ill health, personal and family problems. However, it was recognised that there was a need for skilled workers in all sectors, and the pool of unwaged adults, particularly women returning to work after periods of childcare, was seen as a significant group for whom provision could be developed.

Political control of Hertfordshire County Council

Although control of the county council has traditionally been in Conservative hands, at the time of the interviews the council was 'hung' with no party in overall control. The committees were chaired by Labour Party councillors with Alliance support, and this situation was expected to continue until elections in 1989.

Adult, further and higher education in Hertfordshire

At the time of the research adult and further education were not structurally separated in the county. At county level, the Further and Higher Education Sub-Committee reported to the Education Committee. There were several cross county panels covering different curriculum areas, including one for adult education.

There were nine colleges of further education and two specialist colleges (agriculture and horticulture, art and design) in the county. Of these, interviews were conducted in three colleges: Cassio College in Watford, De Havilland College, which had sites in Welwyn and Hatfield, and St Albans College. The area covered was therefore the central and south-western part of the county, where links were considered to be closest with the educational guidance service based in Hatfield. The further education colleges had responsibility for the provision of non-vocational education for adults.

FE Colleges were involved in the training consortia which were developing provision for unemployed adults. At the time of the interviews, the new arrangements for the Department of Employment's Employment Training Programme were not finalised.

The major provider of higher education in the county was Hatfield Polytechnic. The EGSA in Hertfordshire was different from those in Bradford and Hackney in that it was located in premises on the polytechnic campus and the Director of the service was a member of the polytechnic staff.

APPENDIX III

THE CASE STUDY EGSAS

Bradford Education Advice Service for Adults	Hackney Education Advice Service	Educational Guidance for Adults – Hertford
LOCATION		
Central Library 4th floor (since moved to 7th floor)	Portakabins: School playground – moving to building shared with community organisations	Portakabin: Hatfield Polytechynic Campus
STAFFING		
1 F/T Co-ordinator 2 F/T Guidance/outreach works 2 P/T Admin (= 1.4 F/T equivalent	1 F/T Co-ordinator 3 F/T Advice Workers 1 P/T Advice Worker 1 P/T Admin Worker 1 P/T (temporary) Information Worker	1 P/T Director – on staff of Hatfield Polytechnic 1 P/T Administrator (18.5 hrs p/w) 1 F/T Counsellor – shared between 4 3 P/T Admin and Information Workers on Community Programme
FUNDING AND MANAGEMENT		
Bradford Metropolitan District Council: funds post, through different budgets – only 1 on funding that does not need annual re-application and running costs. Premises rent free. The service is a voluntary sector organisation, with an independent management committee. It will be affected by the Council's proposal to move all Council-funded voluntary sector organisations into a community trust.	**ILEA**: 2 F/T posts plus P/T Advice Worker and admin hours; plus running costs. **Inner City Partnership**: 2 F/T posts, P/T posts and new premises. The service is a company limited by guarantee with an independent management committee. Currently negotiating with Hackney Borough Council to determine the structure of the service after the transfer of responsibility for education from the ILEA in 1990.	**Herts County Council**: F/T post plus P/T administrator plus running costs. **Hatfield Polytechnic**: Director's time plus running costs of premises. **MSC**: Community Programme posts. The Director of the service is a member of the Polytechnic's staff and reports to both the Polytechnic and the County Council. The service has an advisory committee. Negotiations in progress between Herts County Council and Hatfield Polytechnic about the future shape of the service.

for Adults: Information on Enquirers

Sex (where recorded)	%
Male	44.80
Female	55.20
Age (where recorded)	
16-	0.27
16+	7.17
20+	44.90
30+	30.51
40+	9.49
50+	4.96
60+	2.70
Previous Education/Work Experience (where recorded)	
No qualifications	38.93
CSE	3.97
'O' level or equivalent	20.78
Non advanced vocational	11.90
'A' level or equivalent	6.99
Higher vocational	2.64
Higher education	10.45
Manual work	1.33
Non-manual work	1.13
Professional	1.88
Employment Status (where recorded)	
Unemployed	49.10
Redundant/newly unemployed	1.90
Employed part-time	5.30
Employed full-time	25.28
MSC Scheme	1.20
Student full-time or part-time	7.00
Home responsibilities	7.13
Retired	2.56
Registered disabled	0.53

Ethnic Origin

(self-ascriptive monitoring recorded for short sample periods)

Sample Periods	**Ethnic Origin**	%
a) March 1987	European U.K.	47
b) Sept. 1987	European	3
	Asian	38
	Afro-Caribbean	9
	Other	3

Total: 40 enquirers

	%
In person	57.75
By telephone	39.20
By post	3.05

How Enquirers learned about E.A.S.A	
Job Centres	28.08
E.A.S.A. talks to groups	18.67
FE/HE/AE/Basic Education Tutors	10.39
Exhibitions	10.23
Advice and Counselling Agencies	8.60
Dept. of Employment/MSC Initiatives (Restart, Job Club)	5.03
Community Centres/Community Based Education	4.87
Word of mouth	4.71
Library Services	4.71
Local Authority Departments	1.79
National and local media	0.49
Other EGSAs	0.32
Other Agencies	2.11

Types of provision suggested	
Adult Education	8.94
Basic Education	1.95
Community Education	13.57
Adult access (Upper Schools)	1.35
Vocational further education	21.72
General further education	17.46
Access to further education	6.12
Higher education	17.79
Job Training Schemes	1.35
New Technology Centres	3.21
Return to Study	3.57
Wider opportunities	2.97

Hackney Education Advice Service: Information on Enquirers

Sex	Women 59%	Men 41%
		%
Age	16 - 20 years	8
	21 - 30 years	43
	31 - 40 years	16
	41 - 50	5
	50+ years	3
	Unknown	25
Employment Status	Unemployed	47
	Employed	24
	Part-time employed	3
	Full-time at home	5
	Student	7
	Retired	1
	Unknown	13
Ethnic Origin	Afro-Caribbean	24
	African	7
	Asian	5
	U.K. European	18
	Other European	7
	Other	4
	Unknown	36
Method of Contact	Visit	58
	Telephone	29
	Letter	2
	Referrals	7
Source of Contact	HEAS Publicity	19
	Referrals from agencies	46
	C.A.B	12
	Unknown	23

(January 1986 to March 1987)

		%
Catering		3
Hairdressing		3
Tailoring/Pattern Cutting/Dressmaking		3
Building		7
Secretarial/Office		7
Computers		9
Access Courses		9
Return to Study/Fresh Start/Adult Foundation		5
Community & Social Work		5
Teaching (incl. Access)		6
E.S.L./E.F.L.		4
Literacy and Numeracy		3
A.E.I. Classes		20
Arts & Crafts		3
'O' Levels		3
'A' Levels		1
B.TEC:	General/National	2
	Higher	3
Degree Courses		3
Post-graduate Courses		2

Hertford: Information on Enquirers

Sex	**Female 64%**	**Male 36%**
Age of clients		**%**
16-20 years		1
21-25 years		4
26-30 years		22
31-35 years		27
36-40 years		24
41-45 years		18
46-50 years		2
51-60 years		2
Highest existing qualifications		
Post-graduate		3
Professional		7
First Degree		16
HNC/HND, DIP. Ed.		5
Vocational, RSA, SRN, etc.		11
'A' Level		15
ONC/OND		4
City and Guilds		8
CSE		7
None		6
'O' Level		17
Unknown		1
Employment Status		
Occupations		
Senior management and professional		10
Middle management and lower professional		14
White collar and supervisory		19
Skilled manual		11
Semi-skilled		8
Unskilled		7
Women returners		10
Student		4
Unemployed		12
Unknown		3
Self-employed		1
Early retirement		1

Letter and telephone enquiries which lead to a counselling interview are recorded as interviews.

Total:

Counselling	Telephone	Letter
31%	64%	5%

Level of initial course suggested	**%**
Post-graduate or professional	13.4
First degree	13.95
BTEC, HNC, HND, Dip HE	14.73
Vocational, City & Guilds, SRN, MSC	18.5
'A' Level	5.63
'O' Level	4.12
Preparatory	4.07
Other (includes general discussion)	2.56

HOW EGSAS RECORD INFORMATION ABOUT USERS

During the course of their guidance work EGSAs record information about their users, to maintain records for further guidance work with individuals, to provide information for monitoring the service, and to provide evidence for feedback activity. This process is described in Chapter 3.2 of the report.

The following checklist, based on the practice of the case study EGSAs, is intended as a guide to services, suggesting the categories of information they will need to record for the purposes described above.

- Enquiry number.
- Date of enquiry.
- Name of guidance worker.
- Language used by the guidance worker during the enquiry.
- How contact was made (e.g. interview, telephone call).
- How the user found out about the EGSA.

- Name, address, telephone number(s) of user.
- Sex.
- Age.
- Ethnic origin (self selected).
- Language(s) spoken by user.
- Area of residence.
- Employment status.
- Childcare needs.
- Education and training background, including existing educational qualifications.
- Work and other relevant experience of user.
- Special educational needs (e.g. learning difficulty, disability).

- Nature of enquiry and user's aims.
- Options discussed.
- Learning opportunity and institution user was referred to (the EGSA may need to provide information according to curriculum area, education/training sector, and institution).
- Action taken by the EGSA.
- Action taken by the user.

- Whether enquiry is pending or completed.
- Pattern of enquiry, i.e. single or repeated contacts.

- Unmet/inappropriately met needs of user or barriers to access identified (a code system would be helpful, see example below).

- Subsequent follow-up of user by the EGSA, giving information about user's experiences and destination (i.e. information for the EGSA to feed back to providers, etc.) and user's comments on the EGSA.

Codes and Definitions for Feedback of Complaints by Users or Advisers

(currently under revision)

(Hackney Education Advice Service)

Code	Meaning	Definition
C	Creche	No creche available. Insufficient creche places. Wrong location or times. Provision unsuitable.
TH	Timetable Hours	Starts too early, finishes too late, etc.
TY	Time of year	Provision at the wrong time of year.
F	Flexibility	When course perceived as unfairly rigid by not taking adults' special circumstances into consideration.
AR	Attitude Reception	Attitude of teaching/support staff.
AT	Attitude Tutor	Unco-operative or offputting to Adult Returner.
R	Racism	Admin staff, teaching staff, students or others perceived as racist.
I	Lack of or misleading information	

IH	From HEAS	
IU	From User	Insufficient background information to progress case.
IP	From Provider	Insufficient or inaccurate verbal or publicised information from support or teaching staff e.g. information via the telephone, advisory interviews, etc.
ER	Entrance Requirement	When an entrance requirement seemingly only debars a prospective student and is not an essential educational pre-requisite.
CC	Course Content	Complaints about subjects included or excluded including ESL, study skills support.
CP	Course Progression	When course seems not to lead to other provision.
E	Enrolment	Procedure offputting to adult returner.
DA	Disabled Access unavailable	
TR	Travel difficulties	
G	Grants	
PNA	Provision Not Available	Mode, subject area.

APPENDIX V

FEEDBACK RECORD FORMS

(Bradford Education Advice Service for Adults; developed by Vivienne Rivis as part of her M.Ed. Feedback Research Project.)

Feedback – Record

Service:

Worker: Co-ordinator/Advice Worker/Information Officer/Admin Officer

Date of Feedback Contact:

Feedback Initiated by: Guidance Service/User/Group of Users/Provider/Other Agency/Other

Provider/Organisation:

Contact Person: **Status:**

Means of Contact: Private/Semi-public/Public/Other

Source of Information: Service User/Group of Users/Provider/Other Agency/Other

Feedback Issue: *(Please give details)*

Providers' Response:

Date: a) Initial:

Date: b) Subsequent

Action taken by provider(s): *(if any)*

Further action taken by service: *(if any)*

Outcome for individuals/groups affected:

Any other comments:

Feedback Record – Notes

Service:	*(please circle name)*
Worker:	*(please circle status)*
Date:	*(of initial contact)*
Feedback initiated by:	*(please circle).* Providers sometimes **request** feedback and so initiate process. Outside bodies, e.g. LEA may urge service to feedback to providers.
Provider/organisation:	*(please give exact description).* For example, 'Community College' does not mean the same thing in all three areas. Please record feedback to local authorities, central government, MSC and voluntary organisations, as well as mainstream providers.
Contact person:	You may well need the name for your purposes – I only need their job title and status. I suggest you delete the names (if you wish) on the copies you send to me.
Means of contact:	I have tried to simplify the coding of this. Here is a key to what I mean:
	Private – ('phone call, letter, private meeting)
	Semi-public – (report, advisory committee, other committee)
	Public – (Public meeting, media)
	Other?
Sources of Information:	Where did you hear about the issue(s) which prompted you to feedback?
From:	Service user(s) – i.e. individual or individuals over a period of time.
	Group of users – i.e. group of students, community group member(s).
	Professional(s) – i.e. tutor, community worker, council officer.
	Other – offical reports, press reports.
Feedback issue:	Please describe in as much detail as you can, noting any previous advocacy work on the issue.

Response of provider/organisation:

a) Initial Date

If you can give some idea of the quality of response it will be very helpful, e.g. perfunctory, dismissive, hostile, defensive, non-committal, concerned, welcoming, supportive, etc.

Under b): If you you can note any subsequent response on your record this would be helpful, especially when I do my follow-up in February 1988. I can then add this information to my records.

Action taken by provider/organisation:

(if any). This may well be difficult to complete initially. Any proposed action could be noted here.

Further action taken by service:

(if any). If you decide to press the organisation again, or use another approach to the issue, please note here.

Outcomes for individuals/groups affected:

The following questions may be helpful when completing this section.

Was existing provision modified in any way?

Was new provision set up?

Were additional support services provided, e.g. creche?

Did provider modify admissions procedures/admin procedures?

Were discriminatory practices dealt with? How?

Were adult learners given any/more control over their own learning?

Were adult learners given any/more control over learning resources?

Were any consultative procedures set up or planned as a result of feedback?

Please add any other comments you feel important.

APPENDIX VI

INFORMATION ON LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES REQUIRED BY EGSAS

EGSAs require detailed information on learning opportunities in order to offer guidance to their enquirers. Such information is a pre-requisite for feedback activity; without it EGSAs cannot identify gaps in provision or provision that is inappropriate to the needs of adult learners. Obtaining such information is a problem for EGSAs as institutions, in many cases, do not provide it on a systematic basis.

The following information was part of a system developed by ALFA, the North London Open College Network, to obtain course information from providing institutions who were members of the network. The institutions filled in form CL1B which was subsequently incorporated in a directory of provision in the area.

L. Butler. *Information and Technology in Educational Guidance* contains a useful checklist for publicity about provision [22, Appendix III 'Guidelines for a Brochure].

HACKNEY AEI ALFA no: Course Title:

Department: Date:

Age group (in practice)	**Requirements for entry:** None / must be: Examples of students' previous or related experience:			**Mode** Eve / PTD / PTD&E	**Length of course**
Number of hours per week	**Time**	**Start date(s)**	**Contact(for particular enquiries)** Phone **Contact(for general information and forms)** Phone **Leaflet**		
Where course is held (see Address Appendix)	**Fees:** Standard (see Fees Appendix) **Other expenses**			**Wheelchair access** Yes / No / Possibly **Wheelchair to WC** Yes / No / Possibly	**Child care facilities** Yes / No / Possibly N.B. Booking charges (see Guidelines)
Aim **Outline and content** **Type of teaching and size of group** **Method of assessment** **Examples of what students have done next**				**Other Information** **ESL/Language Support**	
How and when to apply	Must enrol at beginning of enrolment and at branch where class is held because class fills fast. Waiting list held. Preferable to enrol at beginning of enrolment because of nature of class. Any time. (See Enrolment Appendix)				

Classification and category information for this course:

Age group I:Any / II:Under 19 / III:19 & over	**Suitable entrants** A / B / C / D / E / F / G / H	**Mode** 1:Eve / 2:PT day or PT day & eve / 4:FT / 5:Block / 6:Other	**Length in months** a: Under 3 / b:3–8 / c:9–18 / d:Over 18 / e:Other

Course Title: **ALFA no:** CL1B

Guidelines for Filling in ALFA Forms

(Update May 1986)

1 Deadline for returned forms:

2 PLEASE COMPLETE USING THE FOLLOWING NOTES. Be as honest as possible: the more accurately it is completed, the more useful it will be for both applicants and course tutors.

3 **Economy:** Where entry requirements, contacts, site, aim, outcome, outline, teaching, assessment, or application are the same for, say, PT as for a FT course, please write "As ..."

4 **Course title:** Enter full correct course title (including 'FT' or 'PT' etc., if **relevant**)

Please mention other courses which could be grouped with this: if necessary on a separate sheet.

5 **Age Group:** Enter desired/expected age or 'Any'

6 **Requirements for entry:** Delete or add as appropriate **Examples of students' previous or related experience.** This should be based on your experience and/or on case studies and be as broadly based as possible.

7 **Mode:** Circle correct one

8 **Time(s):** e.g. '9-4', '9.30-12.30', '6-8.30'

9 **Start date(s):** e.g. 'September', 'September/January/April', 'Monthly', 'Occasional'

10 **Contact:** Probably subject organiser and centre organiser

11 **Leaflet:** State title of leaflet(s), if any, for which interested person could ask.

12 **Fees:** e.g. 'Standard PTD or £1'. Books, travel, field trips, etc., may have to be mentioned, as will additional fees (there will be a fees appendix).

13 **Wheelchair access:** Circle correct one. 'Possibly' means that the course could probably be held in a suitable ground floor room by **arrangement in advance.**

14 **Outline and content:** Where possible, include an indication of the **flavour** of the course, the hidden curriculum. Give an idea of skills developed and proportions of time spent on different activities.

15 **Type of teaching:** e.g. 'lecture', 'workshop', 'discussion', 'group work', 'projects'.

16 **Methods of assessment:** e.g. self, group, tutor evaluation, certification

17 **Examples of what students have done next:** Include individual examples of where students have moved on to from the course, as broadly based as possible.

18 **Other Information:**e.g. 'Older students may be admitted', 'Two courses may be taken end on'. Write this on right-hand side of form. The heading is missing but will figure on the printed form.

19 **How and when to apply:** Delete as inapplicable. There will be an enrolment appendix.

20 **ESL/Language Support:** This is a new entry. Please fill the appropriate letter (j to s) which matches the statements below.

ESL/LANGUAGE SUPPORT

Please fill in section according to the following. The course in question:

j Recruits exclusively bilingual people who need ESL support.

k Provides ESL teaching integrated with coursework.

l May provide ESL teaching integrated with coursework.

m Refers students to extra ESL classes specifically for students on this course.

n Refers students to extra ESL classes for students on a group of related courses.

o Refers students to extra ESL classes, open to anyone in the college.

p Refers students to a general study support class in the college.

q Accepts bilingual students with the relevant background for the course but is unable to supply any language help.

r Does not accept bilingual students with the relevant background for the course, if they need ESL support.

s Refers students who are rejected on the basis of their English or prior subject knowledge to a 'feeder' course, possibly in another institution.

ESL

If ESL teaching is integrated with coursework, please specify number of hours.

If a course uses or may use mother tongue as a medium for teaching please indicate this on the form under 'other information'.

21 **CLASSIFICATION STRIP**

Check that entries are correct.

22 **SUITABLE ENTRANTS**

A Anyone of appropriate age.

B No exam requirements, selection by interview and possibly tests.

C Particular groups only, e.g. ethnic groups, people in particular jobs or firms, people approaching retirement, women.

D People who meet particular requirements as detailed, e.g. having RSA I or a degree.

E People who have done some GCE study.

F People who have passed some O Levels (grades A-C) or equivalent (e.g. CSE grade 1).

G People who have passed some A Levels or equivalent or a Special Access course.

H People who have passed some A Levels or equivalent or a Special Access course; or older people who have been especially selected by interview and possibly tests.

23 **PENULTIMATE**

Write on the back of the from every entry for the course that you might like in the index, e.g. a Business Studies Department course might want Audio Typing, Business Communication, Clerical, Diploma in Office Studies, Office Skills, Pitman, RSA, Secretarial, Shorthand, Typing, word processing.

24 **TAILPIECE**

Sign and date below index suggestions.

APPENDIX VII

ALFA

ALFA (Access to Learning for Adults, the North London Open College Network), links educational providers and organisations in Hackney, Islington, Camden and Tower Hamlets, and is mainly concerned with extending and improving access to education for those adults who do not traditionally enter the education system.

There are currently sixteen member organisations in ALFA:

- City and East London College;
- City of London Polytechnic;
- City University;
- Education Advice Service for Islington Adults;
- Hackney Adult Education Institute;
- Hackney College;
- Hackney Education Advice Service;
- ILEA Careers Service;
- Islington Adult Education Institute;
- Kingsway College;
- Queen Mary College, University of London;
- Montefiore Community Education Centre;
- North London College;
- Polytechnic of North London;
- Tower Hamlets Adult Education Institute;
- Tower Hamlets Education Advice.

Its aims are to:

- develop links between member institutions that will improve opportunities offered to adult learners, particularly those who have benefited least from the education system;
- increase equality of learning opportunities through the removal of barriers to entry and by recognizing the validity of non-traditional learning patterns;
- increase student movement between sectors and between learning programmes thorugh active participation in the In LOCCC accreditation system;

- identify gaps in provision and encourage the development of courses to fill them.
- improve the quality of educational information and advice to adults.
- initiate appropriate staff development programmes in line with these aims.

Member organisations work together through named link people in each organisation in a wide variety of activities which are co-ordinated centrally. Each area of work is planned to meet the needs of adult learners, particularly those who have benefitted least from the system. ALFA's work to date has therefore covered four main areas: the following are examples of the kind of work done.

Information on educational opportunities

- Details of Access and Return to Learning Courses provided in member institutions and presented in single booklets (e.g. Cross ILEA Access booklet).
- Computerised database of all course provision in each institution, presented with the adult student in mind (e.g. ALFA Directories).

Curriculum development

- Development of new, linked or bridging courses specifically designed for adult learners (e.g. Access to Higher Education Electronics from Community Technology Centre).

Staff development

- A wide programme of staff training events to support staff who are reaching a changing client group (e.g. for staff in Building and Construction Departments;
- Access Forums for staff in further and higher education engaged in teaching Access courses).

Research and development

- a range of projects which aim to identify good practice, gaps in provision and make recommendations for improvements (e.g. Educational needs of bilingual students, Links between Further and Higher Education).

ALFA is one of four Open College Networks in London and is collaborating with them in a major new initiative, the development of a London-wide Accreditation system. Such a system provides credits for the learning that adults achieve in courses or programmes which currently carry no external qualifications; it enables adults to move from course to course, from education to training, using the credits they have earned on recognized programmes. This system matches accreditation systems operated by other Open College Federations in the UK.

APPENDIX VIII

FEU/REPLAN

Further Education Unit

Chairman
Allan Ainsworth, Personnel Manager, John Player Group

Members
Mr J Baker, Confederation of British Industry
Mr G A Brinsdon, Association of Metropolitan Authorities
Mr M Cross, Royal Society of Arts
Business and Technician Education Council
City and Guilds of London Institute
Mr G Kendall, The Training Agency
Mr D G Libby, Department of Education and Science
Mr L J Rees, Welsh Joint Education Committee
Mr G M Rowarth, Association of Principals of Colleges
Association of Colleges for Further and Higher Education
Ms C Sherriff, Trades Union Congress
Mr B D Short, Her Majesty's Inspectorate
Mr A F Warren, National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education
Mrs J Winker, Association of County Councils

Observers
Dr F D Duffin, Department of Education, Northern Ireland
Mrs J Hall, National Curriculum Council
Mr J Howgego, Scottish Education Department
Professor P Thompson, National Council for Vocational Qualifications

Secretary
Geoff Stanton, Chief Offier, Further Education Unit

Objectives

The objects for which The Further Education Unit (FEU) is established are to promote, encourage and develop the efficient provision of further education in the United Kingdom and for that purpose:

a) to review and evaluate the range of existing further education curricula and programmes and to identify overlap, duplication, deficiencies and inconsistencies therin;

b) to determine priorities for action to improvie the provisionn of further education and to make recommendations as to how such improvemtn can be effected:

c) to carry out studies in further education and to support investiagations of an experimentation in, and the development of, further education curricula and to contribute to and assist in the evaluation of initiatives in further education;

d) to disseminate and publish information, and to assist in the dissemination and publication of information, about recommendations for and experiments and developments in further education.

Address

2 Orange Street, London WC2H 7WE Telephone: 01-321 0433

REPLAN

- REPLAN is a programme to promote the development of education opportunities for the adult unemployed.
- REPLAN aims to help those who provide education by identifying and publicising the most effective ways and means of meeting the educational needs of the unemployed, and by encouraging closer collaboration between the various providing agencies.
- The programme is funded by the Department of Education and Science and the Welsh Office; certain elements of the programme are also supported financially by the Training Agency. On behalf of REPLAN, the FEU and the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) are managing complementary programmes of development and NIACE is employing and managing an advisory team of field officers led by a national co-ordinator.
- Staff development programmes are being organised by NIACE in collaboration with the Regional Advisory Councils for further education, with participants drawn from a wide range of institutions and agencies in the statutory and voluntary sectors.
- Education Support Grants are being allocated to many local education authorities to strengthen the planning and co-ordination of provision for unemployed adults in their areas.
- Further information on REPLAN, contact:
  The REPLAN Office (DES) – Tel: 01-934 0612
  Elizabeth Weightman (FEU) – Tel: 01-934 9415
  Tony Uden (NIACE) – Tel: 0533 551451

APPENDIX IX

UDACE

WHAT IS UDACE?

UDACE is the Unit for the Development of Adult Continuing Education in England and Wales, created by the Secretary of State for Education and Science within the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education. It examines issues in education and training for adults, recommends strategies for development, and mounts projects to encourage development. The Unit's operation is built on collaboration with a wide range of agencies and individuals. It works principally through groups, including practitioners and others, who are brought together to share experience and ideas and develop common approaches and understanding of the issues. These groups prepare consultative and policy papers, and plan and supervise project work. Each group is supported by a full-time officer, and project staff where appropriate.

DEVELOPMENT TOPICS

Educational Guidance

The Government has asked UDACE to establish a National Educational Guidance Initiative to act as a focus for development in this field over a five year period. In this field the Unit's objectives are:

- to provide an information, advice and consultancy service to local bodies;
- to provide advice and assistance to national bodies, including DES and the Training Agency;
- to collect and and disseminate good practice by publishing handbooks and guidelines, and by holding seminars and conferences;
- to help in the planning and development of training for educational guidance workers, in collaboration with other agencies.
- to initiate and develop strategies for the furtherance of educational guidance for adults at local, regional and national level.

Access

The Unit began work on access in 1987. The Development Group has three broad objectives:

- to stimulate the development of coherent approaches to access policy at local, regional and national level, through the publication and dissemination of a discussion/consultative document (*Developing Access*) and the preparation of policy recommendations;
- to identify and disseminate information on innovative practice in access;
- to mount projects to stimulate development in key areas of access. Two such projects are currently in progress: the development of accreditation based Open College Networks; and the development of interviewing and assessment techniques for entry selection in a broad range of education and training.

Planning and Structures

The Unit began work in this field in 1988, with a paper on the implications for adults of the Education Reform Act 1988. The Development Group's broad objectives are::

- to encourage the development of effective policies for the education of adults at institutional and Local Authority level;
- to disseminate good practice in planning for the education and training of adults;
- to prepare and publish guidance and practical material on management issues in the education and training of adults.

PUBLICATIONS

The Unit disseminates much of its work through a range of publications. These include policy papers, discussion and consultative papers, handbooks and practitioner materials, UDACE News, and information leaflets. A full publications list is available on request from NIACE., Publications Sales Department, 19B De Montfort Street, Leicester LE1 7GE. Tel: 0533 551451.

NEGI

THE EDUCATIONAL GUIDANCE INITIATIVE

The Department of Education and Science and the Department of Employment Training Agency have asked UDACE to establish a National Initiative to act as a focus for development in educational guidance for adults. The Initative is intended to run for five years from April 1988 and will:

- provide an information, advice and consultancy service to local bodies, in particular local education authorities, in developing local networks for educational guidance and in responding to national initiatives;
- provide advice and assistance to national agencies, including the DES and the Department of Employment Training Agency;
- disseminate good practice, by collecting information on good current practice, issuing handbooks and guidelines, and holding conferences and seminars;
- help in the planning and development of training programmes for guidance workers, in collaboration with relevant agencies;
- initiate and develop strategies for the furtherance of educational guidance for adults as local, regional and national level.

BACKGROUND

Educational Guidance was UDACE's first development topic. During the first three years of work the Educational Guidance Development Group undertook extensive consultation, based on its document *Helping Adults to Learn,* and mounted a project programme which included:

- a pilot consultancy service to assist those developing educational guidance provision;
- pilot training programmes for educational guidance workers in two regions;
- a study of assessment in educational guidance;
- investigations into the management of information, the use of information and the uses of information technology in educational guidance.

THE CHALLENGE OF CHANGE

The culmination of the first phase of UDACE's work on educational guidance was the publication of the report, *The Challenge of Change: developing educational guidance for adults*, which drew on the results of the consultation and of the projects. The report recommended that educational guidance should be available to all adults, as a means of helping them to make maximum use of education and training opportunities, and as a means to help institutions to respond to adult needs. The report also recommended the creation of a national agency to stimulate and support development at local and national level. The UDACE National Educational Guidance Initiative is the Government's response to that recommendation, and will now provide this national focus.

THE NEED

In 1986, the MSC commissioned UDACE and the Scottish Institute of Adult and Continuing Education (SIACE) to undertake a large scale study of adult needs for guidance about education and training. The survey suggested that some ten million adults would like advice but that the services available are quite inadequate to meet this demand, despite valuable initiatives in some areas. The report of this study has been published as *Advice and Guidance to Individuals* by Judy Alloway and Peter Nelson.

CONTACT AND ENQUIRIES

For further information about this project, please4 contact Vivienne Rivis, Head of Guidance, UDACE, c/o YHAFHE, Bowling Green Terrace, Leeds LS11 9SX. Tel: 0532 444414.

All of these reports are documented in the Unit's publications. A full list is available from NIACE Publictions Sales, 19B De Montfort Street, Leicester LE1 7GE. Tel: 0533 551451.